

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Philanthropist Artemis Nazarian Dies

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. – Philanthropist Artemis Nazarian passed away on April 9 at the age of 88 as a result of complications from coronavirus

infection. She was well known to Armenians throughout the world as a modest yet unwavering supporter, together with her husband, Nazar Nazarian, of a variety of Armenian institutions.

Born in Aleppo, Syria in 1932 as Artemis Topjian, she came with her family to Boston at the age of 2. She learned Armenian at the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) building in Watertown. Her maternal uncle Garabed (Charlie) H. Sulahian was an important leader of the ADL and chairman of its District Committee of the US and Canada for many years.

see NAZARIAN, page 6



Artemis and Nazar Nazarian

## An April Unlike Any Other for Local Churches

WATERTOWN – The unthinkable has happened and the globe has gone into shut-down mode. How do Armenian churches and the members of the clergy handle this situation, especially in

April, a month in which the church celebrates its holiest holiday, Easter, and marks the darkest of days, April 24?

Several members of the clergy interviewed were articulate not only about the difficulties and challenges they are facing, but also the hope they can offer using technology and the communion they feel with their members.

Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, the pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, like the other members of the clergy interviewed, stressed that while it is new territory holding virtual ser-

vices, it is the spirit that counts.

“I am trying to find different ways of reaching out, in meaningful ways,” Kouzouian said.

He was interviewed on Easter Sunday and noted that just a couple of hours ago, he was conducting a service in church, celebrating the Resurrection, working with his wife, Arpi, who was filming.

Many, Kouzouian said, “are grateful the church is still there for them. This is the reality for this year but we haven’t lost touch with our people.”

He added, “This is our spiritual journey together.”

Fr. Arakel Aljalian of St. James Armenian Church in Watertown was also struck by the timing. “This was a first for all churches around the world, to not gather together on the holiest of all days. We were able to live stream our Divine Liturgy/Badarak, as

see CHURCHES, page 5

## Erdogan, Istanbul Patriarch Speak

ISTANBUL – Patriarch Sahak II Mashalian of Constantinople and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a phone conversation amid the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a news release issued by the patriarchate.

During the April 8 telephone conversation, Erdogan asked Mashalian about the state of affairs of the patriarchate and the Turkish-Armenian community, according to the news release.

Erdogan thanked the patriarch for the latter’s contribution in the fundraiser-campaign for the coronavirus response, according to the statement.

The Turkish president told the Patriarch that he has facilitated the possibility of return of Armenian nationals to Armenia, referring to the 100 Armenian citizens who are being transported by land from Istanbul.

The Armenian government has ensured the leasing of the vehicles, but due to the closed borders with Turkey the buses will travel via Georgian territory, which required permission from Turkish and Georgian authorities.

## Armenia Airlines Cancel All Regular Flights

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia airlines has cancelled all regular flights until May 15, the air carrier said in a released statement on Monday, April 13. As the statement read, the decision was made due to circumstances caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

The company extends apologies to customers over the caused inconveniences and informs that it will offer travel vouchers to its passengers for cancelled flights. The ticket holders may use the travel voucher for a travel with the airline until December 31, 2020.

## Armenia Seeks to Launch Test Kit Manufacturing

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Institute of Molecular Biology of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences is currently negotiating with manufacturers from a number of countries for acquiring the necessary materials for launching the production of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test kits for the diagnostics of the novel coronavirus.

Institute Director Arsen Arakelyan said at a news conference that they will launch the manufacturing process after they acquire the materials.

“We have the required equipment but we are also looking into acquiring some other non-essential devices which will however accelerate the process,” he said.

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## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

## Armenia Extends Shutdown

YEREVAN (RFE/RL, Panorama) – Armenia’s government on Monday, April 13, extended by one month a state of emergency which it had declared on March 16 following the first cases of coronavirus recorded in the country.

The government said that serious restrictions on people’s movements and a ban on many types of economic activity imposed by it later in March are still essential for slowing the spread of the virus which has killed 14 people so far.

During the extended emergency rule the government will also be empowered to requisition hotels or other private properties for accommodating people placed under quarantine.

At the same time, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s cabinet lifted virtually all restrictions on coronavirus-related news reporting. They were already softened significantly on March 26 following strong criticism from journalists and media watchdogs.

“If further monitoring detects a rapid spread see SHUTDOWN, page 2



Disinfecting the Kozanyan Meat and Liquor Store in Glendale

## Armenian Businesses in Glendale Grapple with COVID-19

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

GLENDALÉ – The spread of COVID-19 has impacted businesses in Glendale in various ways. While most have been adverse, some companies have found ways to survive and even expand. Obviously only a small sampling is presented in this article.

The situation has been dire for small businesses that have not been included as “essential” and therefore were forced to shut down. Abril Bookstore, a community cultural institution in Glendale, was closed since mid-March. Owner Arno Yeretzian said that all forthcoming events had to be cancelled. Yeretzian could only periodically come in to fill online orders. He said, “It is a huge hardship for us.” He had to

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Artsakh Voters Go to Polls on April 14

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) — A total of 44.9 percent of eligible citizens participated in the second stage presidential elections in Artsakh on April 14, Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission of Artsakh Gyane Arushayan reported.

She noted that 47,050 people have voted.

Arushanyan said that the low voter turnout will have no impact on the election and the candidate with most votes will become Artsakh's President.

President of the Free Fatherland Party Arayik Harutyunyan and incumbent Foreign Minister Masis Mayilyan are running for the presidency in the second round. They garnered 49,26% and 26,4% of votes respectively in the first round.

Mayilyan, however, has called on voters not to participate in the election due to the danger of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

## Armenia Catholicos Urges Release of Kocharyan from Jail

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II has urged the authorities to release former President Robert Kocharyan, citing recommendations from doctors to safeguard Kocharyan against health complications amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Kocharyan, who was the president of Armenia in 1998–2008, is accused of overthrowing the constitutional order and money laundering. The first case is related to the crackdown on peaceful protesters marching against the results of the presidential election in March 2008. At the time, ten people were killed in clashes between protesters and the police, about 200 were injured. At the end of August 2018, the court released Kocharyan on bail but he was incarcerated again on December 7 of 2019.

The Catholicos said he believes that a person's life was given to them by God, and that caring for them is everyone's responsibility.

Given the spreading pandemic, Karekin II said special attention is paid around the world to persons in captivity, "and welcome measures are being taken to free people who do not pose a threat to the society," in order to avoid infection.

## Gyumri Police Stabbed

GYUMRI (Armenpress) — Two police officers in the city of Gyumri have been stabbed and wounded in the line of duty on April 14, the Gyumri Police Department said.

The officers conducted a traffic stop amid the nationwide coronavirus-related lockdown and asked the motorist and the passenger of a car to produce identification and permitted movement documents, only to be attacked and stabbed by one of them.

The officers tackled and disarmed the assailant. The suspect is in custody.

The wounded officers were taken to a local hospital.

## Artsakh Issues Self-Isolation Order for Some Settlements

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) Commandant Grigori Martirosyan on Tuesday, April 14 imposed movement restrictions and issued a self-isolation order for the residents of several villages in order to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The settlements affected by the decision are presumably home to the six confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Karabakh.

According to the decree, people living in the villages in question will not be able to leave their places of self-isolation beginning from April 15.

Karabakh has declared an emergency situation from April 12 to May 12. The measure was announced by outgoing President Bako Sahakyan and is aimed at curbing the spread of the novel coronavirus.

# Armenia Extends Shutdown

SHUTDOWN, from page 1

of so-called fake news we could revert to those restrictions," Justice Minister Rustam Badasyan warned during a cabinet meeting.

The Armenian Ministry of Health said in the morning that the total number of coronavirus cases rose by 26 to 1,039 in the past day. The ministry reported comparable daily numbers of new infections in the course of last week. The virus spread more rapidly in Armenia earlier in April and in late March.

Citing the government data, Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan, who is responsible for enforcing the state of emergency, said the lockdown is working and should further stem the spread of the disease in the coming weeks. The authorities will also step up the controversial use of mobile phone data to track potential carriers of the virus and continue to expand COVID-19 testing, he told the Armenian parliament later in the day.

"If we manage to keep the downward trend in the spread of infections, the restrictions will be revised," Avinyan said during a parliament debate on emergency rule. Conversely, he added, the government will not hesitate to toughen the restrictions if the infection rate goes up.

Pashinyan admitted that the government's decision on Sunday to reopen some sectors of Armenia's economy, notably open-air construction and cigarette manufacturing, will increase the risk of an upsurge in coronavirus cases. But he said the affected companies and their workers can minimize that risk by following social distancing rules and

taking other precautions.

Armenian farmers, food retailers, public utilities and services, banks as well as food-processing, mining and cargo firms have been allowed to work throughout the lockdown.

As well as expanding the circle of such businesses, the government decided to maintain its nationwide ban on public transport for the time being.

During the parliament debate, lawmakers representing the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK) called for the lifting of the ban. They said the government should also allow more companies – and small businesses in particular – to resume their operations. The pro-government majority in the National Assembly rejected the LHK proposals.

Armenia has confirmed 26 new coronavirus infections, bringing the total number of cases to 1,039 in the country as of 11 a.m. Monday, April 13, the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

So far, 211 people have recovered and 14 have died from COVID-19 in Armenia.

As many as 7,631 tests have been performed in the country since the disease outbreak.

### Financial Assistance

The Armenian government announced on Monday, April 13, additional financial assistance to low-income families hit hard by the economic fallout from the coronavirus epidemic.

The government said it will pay half of all electricity and natural gas bills for February that did not exceed a combined 15,000 drams (\$30) per household.

Garegin Baghramian, the chairman of the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC), estimated that some 220,000 households will be eligible for the subsidy.

Armenia's national utility companies already agreed, at the government's urging, late last month not to cut off for now electricity, natural gas and water supplies to people failing to pay their bills because of coronavirus-related economic disruptions.

"Those who have utility debts [for February] will have them reduced in a corresponding way, while those who don't will receive advance payments that will cover their next payments," Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said during a cabinet meeting held on Monday.

Under its broader stimulus package approved late last month, the government is also subsidizing commercial banks to provide cheap credit to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and farmers.

Artur Javadyan, the governor of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA), announced on Monday that 741 SMEs, agribusiness firms and farmers have already qualified for low-interest or interest-free loans worth a total of 10.5 billion drams (\$21 million).

"There were pessimistic claims that nobody is going to apply for such loans because they don't need such aid and that a different kind of aid is needed," Pashinyan said in this regard. "But these figures show that there is a fairly good decree of [borrowing] activity and I'm sure that we will have even better indicators ... in the coming days."

## Armenia and Georgia Team up to Organize Evacuation of Exchange Students From US

YEREVAN — Thirty-five Armenian exchange students enrolled in different US schools under the FLEX and ACES programs returned home on April 9, spokesperson for the Armenian

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan reported.

The Embassy of Armenia in the US and the Armenian Honorary Consulate in Chicago coordinated the safe trans-

portation of the students from 19 US states to the city of Chicago, followed by a Doha-Tbilisi flight and the transfer to Armenia by bus. The students were provided all necessary medical safety equipment. The greeting and escort of the Armenian students to the departure lounge at Doha Airport was also coordinated.

"As already was stated, the Embassy of Armenia in the US has been in constant contact with the Armenian students who were studying in high schools of different US states within the framework of the FLEX program, and with the program representative in Armenia. On April 9, due to the agreement reached between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Georgia, the transfer of the students to Armenia and Georgia, respectively, was organized.

This is yet another good example of the cooperation between Armenia and Georgia in terms of organizing the return of citizens amid the situation with COVID19 pandemic. We thank the American coordinators for organizing the transfer of Armenian students quickly and smoothly, as well as our Georgian partners for their support and effective collaboration," stated Naghdalyan.

Upon their return to Armenia, the students are subject to a 14-day mandatory quarantine regime.



Students at the airport on their way back





## INTERNATIONAL

# TCA of US and Canada Sends Emergency Aid to the Vahan Tekeyan School of Beirut

WATERTOWN — The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) has sent the Vahan Tekeyan School of Beirut, Lebanon an emergency donation of \$10,000 due to the difficulties it faces as a result of the ongoing economic and political crises in Lebanon, now compounded by the coronavirus pandemic.

TCA has supported the school since its inception. In fact, TCA was formed on the basis of auxiliary committees which worked to raise funds for the school in the United States prior to TCA's establishment as a separate organization. Afterwards, TCA continued the support provided by those auxiliary committees, and Armenians in the US and Canada continued generously to support the development of the school, which started at the elementary level and expanded to intermediate

The school was founded in 1951 to serve Armenian students living in shanty houses in the impoverished quarters of Sanjak and Tiro, where Armenian refugees from Alexandretta settled after 1939. Its current three-story building (funded by the Barsamian family of benefactors in the US) was inaugurated



Vahan Tekeyan School of Beirut during a festival

in 1965 in the Bourdj Hammoud neighborhood, populated predominantly by Armenians. The school expanded from kindergarten and elementary school grades to an intermediary level in 1991.

While the Central Board knows that this crisis is getting worse, and the needs of the Vahan Tekeyan School are great, it also knows that the Tekeyan School has many friends throughout the world. Those who wish to help the

school in these difficult times may send their donations through the TCA headquarters at the following address, Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472.



More information may be obtained by telephone at 617 924-4455 or the email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com).

## COVID-19 Strikes Armenians in Istanbul, Citizens Of Republic of Armenia Begin to Return Home

ISTANBUL (Agos, Jamanak, Nor Marara, Arevelk.am, RFE/RL) — At least six Armenians have died in Istanbul from the coronavirus from the end of March till April 9. Two floors have been reserved for the treatment of COVID-19 patients at Surp Prgich (Holy Savior) [Armenian] National Hospital in the Yedikule quarter of Fatih district in Istanbul, and they are full of patients. The hospital possesses 16 ventilators. Some of the medical staff of Surp Prgich Hospital have been infected. Furthermore, there are Armenians being treated at other hospitals of the city.

On Wednesday, April 8, there were 812 deaths in all from coronavirus and 38,226 cases of infections, according to Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca.

The 44-year-old former chairman of Yeniköy's Kiud Dpoy Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church Hagop Baltayan, who has two children, has died of the illness, as has Zhamnur Teller, similarly leaving behind two children while her husband also fights against the sickness in a Sisli hospital. Two Armenians from Armenia, mother and daughter, have also died in Turkey in April. The first death of an Armenian at Surp Prgich from the disease, prior to the above two individuals, was of 76-year-old Bedros Sahakian during the first weekend of April. The first death of an Armenian in Turkey from coronavirus was that of Avedis Ustaaramoglu and it took place in a non-Armenian hospital.

According to Bedros Sirinoglu, chairman of the Armenian hospital's board of trustees and chairman of the Turkish Armenian Foundations [Vakif's] Union, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul is helping the needy in these circumstances, and other Armenian organiza-

tions are only participating when their assistance is being requested. One example is the Parish Council of Beyoglu. Its chairman, attorney Simon Çekem, and his colleagues managed to send the assembled 210 boxes of food and other necessities to needy parishioners on April 6 despite the coronavirus restrictions due to the help of some young volunteers.

At the end of March, the Patriarchate initiated a campaign to contact the elderly via telephone to make them not feel alone. Approximately 20 volunteer women initially used a list of 170 telephone numbers. Additional Armenians who wished to benefit from this service were told to apply through their local churches.

The Istanbul Armenian community

the battle against the coronavirus. He told Sirinoglu that similarly the state would provide the hospital with medications for coronavirus. However, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported that it had not received any such official notification.

The coronavirus crisis has led to the unemployment of many Armenians from the Republic of Armenia living in Turkey. The date when this crisis will be over is uncertain and the cost of living in Istanbul in particular is great. Consequently a group of Armenian volunteers helped to organize their return. The volunteers included Kakig Musheghian, Garabed Tarpinian, Anna Ghugasian and Ardiom Gharaghazarian.

The committee quickly got in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, which within five days issued updated travel documents for the Armenian citizens who needed them. As Turkey does not maintain diplomatic relations with Armenia the return had to be orchestrated via Georgia. Four buses were prepared to take 102 Armenians to the Georgian border, but some at the last minute declined to leave for the time being, leaving 72 to depart. They arrived on April 9, but some returnees

who owed fees or fines faced some financial difficulties in doing so, while others had issues with their documents.

The two buses which were supplied by the Republic of Turkey turned back at the Georgian border but an additional bus had been sent to meet them by the Republic of Armenia. The group then had to travel through Georgian territory in two buses without stopping until it reached Armenia. When they arrive, they will be placed under a 14-day quarantine. While on their journey, the travelers were given masks and gloves to use on the buses.



The courtyard of Holy Savior National Armenian Hospital

participated in the Turkish state's "We Are Sufficient unto Ourselves" fundraising campaign for coronavirus aid and, according to Sirinoglu, donated 500,000 Turkish liras through their benevolent organizations. The Patriarchate itself donated 100,000 Turkish liras.

In a phone call with the patriarch, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan remarked that he has facilitated the return to Armenia of citizens of that country living in the Republic of Turkey and foresaw sending medications to help the Republic of Armenia to help in

## International News

### Aznavour Foundation Joins Fight against Coronavirus

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Aznavour Foundation announced this week joining the fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The foundation issued a statement, which says, "Today, all countries are facing challenges in the field of healthcare. However, we are certain that together we can overcome this disease by being more united, more caring and more responsible. Many years ago, Charles Aznavour stood by Armenia and its people in a difficult time and commenced the humanitarian activities. Pursuant to Charles Aznavour's values, the Aznavour Foundation joins the worldwide fight against COVID-19", highlighted Nicolas Aznavour, Co-founder and Chairman of Board of the Aznavour Foundation.

"In close cooperation with Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, the Aznavour Foundation has enabled the purchase of more than 5,000 N95 masks and 1,000 protective jumpsuits for the doctors and nurses, as well as the delivery of more than 7,000 liters of disinfectant to medical care facilities, which will suffice for the 2 months needs and thus create a safer environment for specialists who have been working with exceptional dedication and altruism for months, saving many lives.

The initiative was made possible with the support of the Foundations "Armenia" and "Philipposian et Pilossian" from Switzerland, Armen Grishkian and other donors who wished to remain anonymous.

### Sole Custodian of Armenian Church in Dhaka Dies at 89

DHAKA, Bangladesh (Panarmenia.net) — The last Armenian who took care of the Armenian Church of Holy Resurrection in Old Dhaka, Bangladesh in the past decades, Michael Joseph Martin (Mikhail Hovsep Martirosian) passed away at the age of 89 on April 14, Arevelk newspaper reports.

His family confirmed the news, adding no other Armenians lived in the city any longer. The church has not had a priest for a long time and Martirosian was its sole custodian.

He was born on June 6, 1930, in Rangoon, Burma (currently Myanmar) and moved to Dhaka in 1942. From the 1980s, he took care of the church and the cemetery next to it, where about 400 Armenians are buried.

Martirosian was awarded a medal by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II for his service to the Armenian church.

He died in Canada, where he had moved due to his advanced age and illness in order to be close to his children.

### Foreign Ministry Turns To Online Services

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Armenian foreign ministry is starting to render some consular services online, namely through video communication.

Citizens willing to receive certificates of repatriation, changing passport (non-biometric), extending the validity of passports will be able to submit the applications without going to consular service bodies in person, and send and receive the documents by mail.

A task force will be created in the consular department of the Foreign Ministry to render consular services to Armenian citizens anywhere in the world.

Armenia has 55 embassies and consular offices in 44 countries.

The foreign ministry emphasized that the legislative initiative that it had introduced back in 2019 is being highlighted today, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, when many countries are enforcing strict lockdown measures and restricting movement of people, and that it is imperative to create alternative, remote options.

The ministry said the video-communication consular services will be deployed very soon, after respective decisions of the government come into force and securing some technical regulations.



# Community News

## Armenian Consulate General in LA Active During Coronavirus Pandemic

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

GLENDALÉ — Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles Ambassador Armen Baibourtian reported that the Consulate General, located in Glendale but having jurisdictional responsibility over all the western states, remains operational. The State Department along with state and city authorities enabled it to be open as long as all precautionary measures were followed.

In addition to a large number of Armenian citizens permanently residing in California and throughout the West Coast, there are also a couple of hundred short-term visitors from Armenia, Baibourtian revealed. In order to find out exactly how many Armenian citizens are now staying provisionally in the western United States, the Consulate General encourages electronic registration. At present, primarily those with problems contact the Consulate General. Many Armenians were able to leave the US to return to Armenia when there were flights from Los Angeles to Yerevan.

Baibourtian explained that his office has prioritized provision of consular services since March 16, when the Consulate General switched to a new mode of operation amidst the pandemic and focused on addressing urgent matters. There are people who need documents to return to Armenia like return certificates. The consular division also processes applications for Armenian citizenship, extension of regular, non-biometric Armenian passports and consular legalization and certification of documents. It issues criminal record certificates and registers citizens via phone calls if they cannot register online.

The Consulate General avoids direct physical interaction with citizens, Baibourtian said. They come to hand over documents, which are taken in, processed and returned. Legalizing documents requires the signature of the applicant however. In addition to the office telephones, communications for urgent matters are maintained through two telephone hotlines operational 24 hours a day, as well as through social media like Facebook and the Consulate's General official website.

On average, Baibourtian said that more than 50 individuals call the hotlines daily in this period, usually to ask questions or request help. At the present time, citizens of the Republic of Armenia in Southern California in general are unable to return to Armenia, as it is now the third week that no any airline makes connecting flights to Yerevan.

Prior to the ending of Aeroflot flights from Los Angeles to Yerevan via Moscow, the airline would only take Russian citizens in conformity with their formal policy introduced for that time period. The Consulate General had to intervene and come to an agreement with them to also take Armenian citizens as a goodwill gesture. The last flight for Armenians was on March 26. Upon the Consulate's General agreement with Aeroflot, 120 citizens of Armenia were able on priority basis to exchange their tickets or purchase new ones and travel to Yerevan. Some airlines that have connecting flights to Yerevan from Los Angeles like LOT Polish Airlines, Russian Aeroflot, Air France, and Austrian Airlines plan to resume their flight in early May.

Those who are now forced to remain in the US fortunately usually have friends or relatives with whom to stay, Baibourtian said. However, many need or will soon need extensions to their visas. Therefore the Consulate General, in cooperation with the US State Department office in Los Angeles, has provided them with the

see BAIBOURTIAN, page 8



Atencio Martin with teammate Julian Windon, a fellow American

## Former Maine Hoop Star Was Playing Professionally in Armenia at Start of Pandemic

*'I Just Knew I Needed to Go'*

GYUMRI, Armenia ([seacoastonline.com](http://seacoastonline.com)) — Atencio Martin's unusual basketball journey has taken him from his high school playing days in Kittery, Maine, to two tours of stardom at Southern Maine Community College sandwiched around a stellar season at the University of Southern Maine.

By Mike Whaley

More recently that odyssey culminated with Martin realizing a lifelong dream of playing professional basketball. He spent the past four and a half months starring in the Eurasian country of Armenia for BC Gyumri, which competes in the Super League of Armenia.

Martin's season was cut short in early February due to the coronavirus pandemic. He flew home several weeks before the league decided to shut down.

"At first I didn't think too much of (the coronavirus pandemic)," said the 2013 Traip Academy (Kittery, Maine) graduate.

"As Americans we always have the view if something's going on somewhere (else), ... 'Well it's not here. I don't have to worry too much.'" he said. "And then I realized I wasn't in America. I was in a country that was closer to China, closer to Asia where the coronavirus was really starting to spread."

Martin, 24, started to take the threat seriously.

"I have a friend who is in the military who gave me advice," he said. "He said this is going to get worse before it gets better."

Martin kept an eye on it and then made the decision it would be better to be home than to be stuck in Armenia, "especially if something happens, a travel ban or something like that," he said.

In late February, Martin's team was in a state of flux. It was going through a sponsorship change so its season had been momentarily suspended.

"During that time my roommates and I spoke to our agents and the team. I made the decision I wanted to leave," he said. "That league hadn't made the decision (to end the season) when I left. I just knew I needed to go."

That was early February. Martin has been back in the states ever since, living and working in Portland, Maine. He hopes once the pandemic ends to return overseas to play another season of professional basketball.

Martin's basketball journey from Kittery to South Portland to Armenia began without much fanfare. SMCC was the only school to recruit him out of Traip, and he recalls being apprehensive. "I think like everyone does when they go to community college at first," he said. "I'm better than this. Looking back I don't even have the words to describe how grateful I am."

see BASKETBALL, page 12

## AIWA Connects Virtually

BOSTON — At a time when social distancing is encouraged, the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) is using virtual platforms proactively and responsively to bring together and connect members and non-members across the globe.

"We had to quickly make adjustment to a life where quarantine, social distancing, virtual meetings, virtual connections, working from home and home schooling is now par for the course," said Ani Kharajian, president of the Board of Directors of AIWA. "AIWA is doing what needs to be done to continue to inspire and empower women throughout the world to bring about positive change in their lives and in their communities as they establish new routines based on our current circumstances."

Numerous virtual events from webinars to Zoom chats to Facebook live have taken place, addressing issues that focus on the current needs of women. "We have pushed ahead with numerous virtual events with the intention of providing unique and relevant content to audiences around the world," said Rachel O. Nadjarian, AIWA's executive director. In depth conversations revealed a need and desire by Armenian women to explore topics related to coping with stress, understanding financial climate in this crisis, marketing in a virtual world, the future of education, family matters, and entrepreneurship to name a few. "We have a line-up of engaged professionals and caring members who want to play a role in keeping women connected to address the challenges and opportunities that arise especially in these times of uncertainty and change."

Even as AIWA adapts to weather this crisis, some things remain constant within the organization's 30 years of establishment. It is sustained by a commitment and dedication by and of its board and affiliate members to provide opportunities for women to support their growth.

"Since its inception, AIWA has been functioning on the premise that an organization by women and for women can bring attention and awareness to women's concerns, empowering them to take on equal roles in the life of Armenian communities," said Kharajian. "Our vision has always been to connect women worldwide and provide them with opportunities for economic and personal advancement through educational and other community events. It is no different today," Kharajian added.

One of the most important aspects of virtual events is that it allows affiliates and members to provide leadership and play a role in engaging and supporting women. Also important is the fact that virtual events hold no boundaries and enable women to engage no matter where they are in the world. Nadjarian, sees this as the silver lining for AIWA. "Connecting women across boundaries and being inclusive is one of our primary goals as an organization that serves all Armenian women. The situation we are fighting the pandemic is unfortunate, but it is in times like these that we adjust and see opportunities for growth and change."

While numerous virtual events have already been hosted by AIWA, professional guests and caring members continue to line up the weeks ahead. Concerns over the fragility of an aging population and caring for the elderly will be covered at a Zoom Live Chat with Physician Dr. Jane Mahakian, founder of the Alzheimer Care of Armenia. Senior media solutions manager Nevart Varadian will provide answers and counsel on branding oneself in an uncertain market, while Dr. Mary Papazian, president of San Jose State University, will provide insight about the changes happening in the educational sector and ways to be prepared for a different future.

These and other numerous upcoming events can be found on [www.aiwainternational.org](http://www.aiwainternational.org) or on Facebook: Armenian Women's International Association.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# An April Unlike Any Other for Local Churches

CHURCHES, from page 1

we did Holy Week Services. Many told us that seeing our St. James sanctuary and “being” in their spiritual home brought many comfort. Of course, our church is built on communion and community, so it is not the same when we are not gathered in person. I know that it is very difficult for parishioners not to be able to attend church and be together. It is also difficult for me as a clergy to be here without my faithful. But, I’ve shared with my parishioners, that it is very powerful for a clergyman to pray to God protect all of his faithful (and all of the world) alone in the church.”

Kouzouian credited his wife, Arpi, the superintendent of the Sunday school, for creating an online curriculum for the young students. “The children were riveted to the screen,” he said.

All the members of the clergy interviewed expressed gratitude that despite the mandated shutdowns, technology is allowing them to communicate with their parishioners.

“It is a way to bring the church to your home. Your living room is now part of our sanctuary,” Kouzouian said.

He added, “Nothing is as special as coming face to face and side by side by side by side” at worship, but he added, “I am delighted that there is another way.”

In fact, he said, the current exploring of online and live-streamed services can help some people even when things go back to normal.

“Not everyone can get to church. This has opened the door to future ministry to continue and hold services,” Kouzouian said. “It is the first time we have tried it on this level.”

With current software, he said, the broadcast is instant and the picture is crisp.

St. James is also helping out with technology. “We are utilizing Zoom and live streams to help our youth, students, and parishioners connect with the church and one another. Most of all, we are trying to do all we can with great love.”

Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian is the pastor, or Badveli, of the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, like the other two members of the clergy, is finding himself in a new kind of situation.

“This was unexpected, so it was an alarming thing that caught everybody by surprise,” he said. “In our church, we feel this is a family. It is not a large church, which helps us over the years to feel that this is our second home.”

Fr. Vart Gyozyalyan of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe in Haverhill, echoed the comments of his clergy colleagues.

Gyozyalyan said after March 19, all activities went online, Gyozyalyan noted, including Bible studies and conference calls, using different platforms such as Instagram and Facebook “to keep our congregation together.”

Gyozyalyan, however, unlike the other members of the clergy interviewed, does not live stream services. “I lit a candle on behalf of the congregation and I took a picture,” he said, which was then emailed and posted on Facebook.

“I have mixed emotions,” Gyozyalyan said. “I am very sad at not seeing my parishioners, not praying together.”

For millennia, he said, “our people were praying together, even during the Genocide.”

Now, he said, “I see the pews are empty but I felt their spirit.”

Again, Gyozyalyan concurred that using technology brings in the parishioners who can connect with him any time. However, he added, Holy Week was especially difficult and lonely, noting that he went into the church every day during that period.

While Gyozyalyan himself does not favor live streaming, he said he supports his fellow members of the clergy who reach out that way. Instead, he says he has prerecorded several sermons and posted them on the church’s YouTube page. “I applaud all my brother clergy who are doing it,” he added.

“As pastor, it is my first task to take care of spiritual nourishment,” Boynerian said.

Memorial Church also broadcasts its Sunday services in Armenian and English. Arpi Boynerian, the wife of Rev. Boynerian, helps him with the technical aspects.

“We get very good comments,” Boynerian said, “both within the church and beyond our community.”

Arpi Boynerian is superintendent of the Memorial Church’s Sunday school. She had created a Palm Sunday program for the children, her

husband said.

In addition, there are virtual prayer meetings every night from 8 to 8.30 p.m.

“People come in and say how they have spent their night,” Boynerian added.

## Reaching Out to Parishioners

Aljalian said that he is trying to make sure that he reaches members of the parish who need him. “We do keep reminding our parishioners that our church is more than the sanctuary or building, and that love carries us during these times. We do our best, and keep reminding parishioners, to focus on hope and not on fear. While it was difficult to celebrate Easter in this current environment, it was also very powerful and perfectly timed that the hope and rebirth and victory of Easter comes right at this time, as a reminder to all,” Aljalian said.

Boynerian concurred. The church wants to be there for parishioners, he said. Therefore, he and the deacons have divided up the list of members so that all members receive phone calls.

For many of the members of the clergy, praying is the way they replenish themselves, so that they in turn can help their parishioners.

Still, they are only human and the current situation is weighing them down, too.

Kouzouian said that he is distraught that several members of the church are in the hospital with COVID-19 and one has already passed away. It causes him “heartache” that he cannot be with them at their time of need. But, he added, “They know *Der Hayr* is praying for them.”

One case that really got to him was the passing of Gerald Boghosian of Lexington, who was Kouzouian’s Godfather at his ordination. (See the obituary on Page 7.)

Aljalian concurred. “It is difficult. Everything we know has been upended. In addition to spending days calling parishioners, there have been funerals and news of ill parishioners and community members. With parish life, baptisms, and weddings on hold, a great deal of focus has been on these sadder aspects of ministry.

“The hardest part is being limited in ministering to and caring for my parishioners. I cannot comfort parishioners, be close to them, hug them, and spend time in their homes or at the hospital with them. I do my best to show love, but this saddens me and is a challenge and one that I feel personally and deeply. I focus, as I tell my parishioners, on the hope that God provides. Holy Week was especially well timed this year. We see Christ suffer and die, but know that He will be victorious and defeat suffering and death. He gives me the strength,” Aljalian concluded.

Gyozyalyan said that for him the situation is very emotional. “I have felt great love and see how much they [parishioners] are missing each other.”

## Helping Those in Need

Kouzouian said that he and volunteers help deliver food to parishioners and their family members who are unable to leave their homes “so that they don’t go out.”

The church is funding the service. In fact, he recalled that he was picking up an order from Eastern Lamejun in Belmont, and when he told the proprietor that the food was to be delivered to a shut-in, the store refused to charge him.

Those interested in making donations to Holy Trinity for continuing its food donation program can make out a check to and send it to Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA 02138; memo: Needy care packages.

Those interested in receiving the service can call the church office at (617) 354-0632 and leave a message.

Kouzouian said that the church has served people connected with Holy Trinity but that if anyone calls them in need, they will help.

The program, Kouzouian said, has been “received very well. People have been very touched. I believe they are uplifted. I talk to them for a couple of minutes. It is the least we can do. We have to take care of each other.”

Fr. Aljalian said that St. James is also involved with helping its members, as well as reaching out to non-Armenian organizations. “We reach out to parishioners to see what they need. We have a number of parishioners who have volunteered to help with individual needs of fellow parishioners and are also reaching out to one another. We as a church are doing what we can for local organizations and hospitals, police and fire depart-

ments, etc., whether its parishioners making masks, our parish donating its supply of gloves, distributing choreg and food, and the like.”

Aljalian said that “Our family and other volunteers have been helping by dropping groceries off, taking food from local restaurants and dropping it off to parishioners, picking up prescriptions, going to the post office for them, and the like.”

Similar activities are going on at the Memorial Church. “Young couples have offered to help with buying groceries for older parishioners,” Boynerian said. The parishioner receiving the food pays for it, he noted.

It’s not only access to the outside world for some; Aljalian said that some parishioners are facing more difficult times. “Parishioners we have spoken with that have lost their jobs have shared that they are hopeful they will get their jobs back, are taking advantage of state and federal programs and so far have shared they are doing ok. I have made them promise to let me know if things change for them. It is a difficult time for all,” Aljalian said.

St. James is not fundraising yet. “We do not have a fund for parishioners at this time, but will explore that if and when the time comes. It is a challenging dynamic because even families with jobs, and even churches, are experiencing great financial challenges at this time. The biggest challenge is we need to know who needs help, and sometimes people are hesitant to ask for it, for many understandable reasons. We will continue to be guided by our central mission: to love and care for one another.”

Like the other churches, members of Hye Pointe are taking care of each other. “In the past we have had an outreach program for families in the area,” Gyozyalyan said.

Now, with COVID-19, even more are helping. Gyozyalyan said that after discussing the matter with the church council, he sent out an email asking for volunteers to help people in need who have health issues and cannot go out in public now. “I asked for volunteers who are comfortable doing grocery and pharmacy runs,” he said. “Two hours later, there were 10 volunteers.”

In addition, he said he and the council have created a group to make follow-up calls to families who have health concerns to check up on them.

## Time for Faith

While they turn to God for their vocations, the members of the clergy interviewed admitted that they turn to God also to sustain their own faiths and replenish their souls.

“I dig into my faith even more,” Kouzouian said. “I can’t imagine going through what we are going through without faith. It would be complete despair without faith. It gets us through the tough days.”

In fact, for many who were interviewed, the symbolism of Easter was relevant.

“My Lord walks with me,” Kouzouian said, after smashing out of the tomb on Easter.

He also said he does get calls from parishioners who are having a hard time, seeking a certain *Bible* passage or soothing words.

“I’ve been living on the phone the past three or four weeks,” Kouzouian said. One caller is at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain. “He doesn’t see any way of this. He is reaching out to me to lift him up,” Kouzouian said. “It is very challenging when you are alone.”

“I have the luxury of going to church. I spend some private time in prayer and that lifts me up. The crucified Christ gives me strength,” Kouzouian said.

To renew himself and replenish his faith, Gyozyalyan said he relies on “Scripture reading and disconnecting together with my wife and kids. We go hiking and walking, doing outside stuff and projects around the house.”

He and his wife, Lusine, have two children, ages 9 and 7.

He also said that he regularly communicates with his fellow clergy members to give and receive feedback in this strangest of times.

Kouzouian said that reaching out to parishioners is rewarding to him. “Every time I leave uplifted. I receive more than I have ever given,” he said.

For Aljalian, “The main way is to reach out to them. We are blessed with a large St. James parish family, and I have spent my days calling parishioners, sometimes dozens a day. I am doing my best to reach out to as many people personally as I can. Parishioners need, especially now, to

connect, to talk, to share their feelings, and to know they are loved. The world around us may be changing, but our love for our parishioners, and God’s love for us, never does. That hope and reassurance is important.”

“My main concern is the spiritual life of our people,” Boynerian said.

Kouzouian’s father, Rev. Mampre Kouzouian, winters in Florida and had been caught there after the shelter in place order. He has just returned to Massachusetts and is in the two-week self-isolation period.

The younger Kouzouian gave credit to his family, saying “my wife and daughter are an extension of my life, my ministry.” He praised his wife for “inspiring me all the time,” adding that his daughter is facing “the challenges of not being in school.”

“The church, from one end of the country to the other, from Armenia to everywhere, is reaching out. You’re not alone,” he said, praising the live feeds from Echmiadzin.

Added Aljalian, “Our motto in our home for our family is: ‘one day at a time.’ It is challenging and overwhelming when we look to the future or too far down the road. But, one day at a time, things are easier. I remind people to go to God – with Him all things are possible. We read in the Gospel of Matthew to ‘not worry about tomorrow.’ As I said in my Easter sermon, this is a time for us to love one another, to help one another, to appreciate one another, and to pray for one another. If we can help others, we should, in any way we can. No act is too small.”

No parishioner of Armenian Memorial has passed away from the virus yet, though a couple of parishioners are in the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and have been affected by COVID-19. One woman, Boynerian said, has just turned 100. “She had the virus and recovered,” he noted with delight. “The other one is 80 and just got it,” he added.

Personal time spent in prayer is vital for Boynerian. “I have my routine, with a time of devotion, which is nourishing my spirit.”

On Easter, Boynerian said, people signed up on Zoom for a fellowship coffee meeting after the second service. “This was the first time we met face to face. People were missing each other, not having seen the others over four or five weeks,” he said. “It is very important that people know that we are all in this together. The church is for everybody. We need to rely on God and each other.”

In a new approach, on Easter eve, Gyozyalyan said he offered blessings to parishioners who drove by the church. “I prayed for each for 30 seconds,” he said. There were more than 100 cars.

And Boynerian said he believes that the church is resilient. “Our church in the past has surprised us so much. It is early and I don’t know how long it will take, but it is challenging.”

Boynerian also expressed gratitude that technology was enabling closer contact with parishioners. “Thanks to technology, we have different means of reaching people,” he said.

The April commemorations are weighing heavily on Boynerian.

“April 24 is around the corner and we as a people need to commemorate it. We are going through the general experience” out of which the Armenians came thought and survived, and that “should make us hopeful that this too shall pass.”

Boynerian said that he is trying to stay as positive as he can. “We as Armenians will get through this ordeal.”

It is not just the spiritual end that Boynerian deals with. His son, Antranig, is a third-year nursing student and works at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. As a parent, of course, he worries. “He takes all the precautionary measures,” he said. We pray to God to protect him.”

His younger son, Arek, 19, is still in Tucson, Ariz., where he is studying finance. He will return to Massachusetts in May.

His wife, who is a technician at an optometry practice, has been temporarily laid off.

One member of the church has succumbed to COVID-19.

While no end is in sight yet, Gyozyalyan offered some words of hope: “I see strong people. Nothing can stop these people. I have seen that whatever happens, we have strong people in our community and Massachusetts.”





## OBITUARIES

## Krikor Kuredjian

### ADL and Tekeyan Leader in Lebanon

BEIRUT – On April 9, Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) party and Tekeyan Cultural Association leader Krikor Kuredjian passed away after a long illness.

Because of coronavirus-imposed laws, the funeral service took place privately at the local Armenian Cemetery Chapel.

Krikor Kuredjian was born on January 1, 1933 in Beirut to Armenian Genocide survivors Setrak Kuredjian, a school teacher, and Dikranouhi Yuzbeykian. He was the youngest of the three siblings.

After working as an apprentice for two years, he founded “Koko Sac” at the age of 17, manufacturing ladies’ handbags in downtown Beirut. He steadily expanded his business and was widely acknowledged and respected as one of the leading manufacturing businessmen in his industry.

Although the Lebanese Civil War dealt a crushing blow to the industry and he lost most of his factory, Krikor continued to manufacture despite the harsh conditions. He came to the aid of other business leaders and even helped his competitors to survive.

He married Makrouhi Dakessian on August 2, 1959 and had three daughters: Mayda Kuredjian, Marina Sarafian and Hilda Hartounian. He loved his sons-in-law Arsen Sarafian and Saro Hartounian, and absolutely adored and cherished his grandchildren Nairi, Armen, Nanor, Raffi, Aram, Lori and Perla. He was so proud of their accomplishments.

Krikor joined the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party at a young age, rising in the ranks and serving on the ADL Lebanon District Committee for many years. He played a particularly critical role during the war, engaging in key negoti-

ations that contributed to the well-being of the West Beirut’s Armenian community during that tumultuous time.

Krikor was deeply connected to the Vahan Tekeyan School in Beirut, having served on its Board as treasurer for over 25 years and safeguarding and ensuring its financial stability during the war. He passionately believed in preserving Armenian culture and heritage. He loved Armenia and served his community with humility and commitment. He instilled this unwavering devotion onto his daughters, who also became active members of ADL and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. He was a charismatic leader and a true Armenian through and through. Above all, Krikor was a moral man. His piercing intellect combined with an unforgiving dedication to what’s right and wrong, defined a code of ethics that we all live by today. He led by example, taught and inspired us to be fair and just, kind and compassionate.

Krikor had an amazing voice, always singing at family and social gatherings. As a young soloist, he sang at the St. Sarkis Church Zvartnotz choir for many years under the leadership of Hovhanness Topalian.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Krikor and Makrouhi Kuredjian Educational Fund of the Vahan Tekeyan School of Beirut, Lebanon. Donations in Lebanon: Please contact Tel. +961 71 720598

Donations in the US: Please make checks payable to the Tekeyan Cultural Association and mail to: 755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472 Memo: Krikor and Makrouhi Kuredjian Educational Fund.

Condolences and contact email: kuredjianfamily@gmail.com

The ADL Eastern District Committee and Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board of US and Canada express their sincere condolences to his daughters Hilda Harutunian, member of TCA Central Board, and Mayda Kuredjian, Executive Secretary of TCA Western region and their families.



## Philanthropist Artemis Nazarian Dies

NAZARIAN, from page 1

As was her Armenian patriotism, her dedication to the Armenian Church was inculcated by her family. She had five clergymen in her family, including former Jerusalem Patriarch-Elect and Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan.

She attended Boston University on a full scholarship and graduated cum laude, becoming the first woman graduate of the

College of Business Administration in accounting. She began working at the firm of Haskins and Sells. In 1954, she married Nazar Nazarian, who continued in the footsteps of his father, Levon, as a successful businessman and philanthropist. She in turn became the accountant for her husband’s businesses and they set up their home in the New York area.

The couple had two children, Levon and Seta. In addition to being a devoted mother,

Artemis was an accomplished pianist and a knitter whose creations won various awards. She was known as a warm and friendly person who loved to tell jokes and stories.

Together, Artemis and Nazar Nazarian played a critical role in supporting so many Armenian institutions throughout the world. The list starts with the Mother See of Holy Ekmadzin, which they unwaveringly championed over the decades, and goes on to include many individual Armenian churches, schools, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), and Armenian cultural organizations. The two of them were an unshakable pillar during times of crisis, and their philanthropy has saved many lives while improving others.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association has been one of those organizations which has been much better able to carry out its mission thanks to this unwavering support. Its educational activities, publications and assistance to Armenian communities in the Middle East, Armenia and Artsakh have been made more potent and effective as a result.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and *Baika* newspapers published by the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, have been modernized and expanded in scope in

part as a result of the help of the Nazarians.

Artemis in particular was interested in supporting education and helped found numerous scholarships via the AGBU, as well as the Artemis Nazarian Preschool of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Los Angeles. She endowed a scholarship at Boston University’s Business School with priority given to students of Armenian descent.

Artemis’ generosity revealed itself in all aspects of life. She gave money to countless people in need, drove elderly or incapacitated patients to their doctor’s appointments through the organization Friends in Service Helping (FISH), and served for many years as treasurer of the Englewood Woman’s Club.

Even with all of her accomplishments, Artemis’s greatest pride and joy was always her family, especially her grandchildren: Seta’s sons William and Nicholas, and Levon and his wife Claudia’s children Matthew, Daniela, and Gregory. Artemis’s relentless positivity, wisdom, wit and love will live in their hearts forever. When the grandchildren were younger, Artemis spent countless hours reciting nursery rhymes to them by memory. As they got older, they learned her famous stories and soaked up her practical wisdom and stoicism – exemplified by having her tonsils removed in the kitchen of her childhood home without anesthetic.

Artemis is survived by her husband Nazar, children, grandchildren, her beloved brother and sister-in-law, Hrand Joseph and Karen Topjian, as well as numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews. She was predeceased by her sister, Leona Boodakian, in 2008.

For more information and photos, see <https://www.rememberingartemis.com/>. Donations in lieu flowers can be made to the AGBU Artemis Nazarian Memorial Scholarship for Performing Arts at [www.agbu.org/artemis-nazarian](http://www.agbu.org/artemis-nazarian).



Artemis and Nazar Nazarian with their children and grandchildren

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OBITUARIES

## Shakae Margaret Shahinian

### Founding Member of St. Thomas Church

WYCKOFF, N.J. — Shakae Shahinian, nee Alexander, formerly of Wyckoff, NJ and Tenafly, NJ has died at the age of 95.

Shakae was born at home in Dorchester, Mass. on February 6, 1925 to Paul Haroutune Alexander and Azniv (Aghayan) Alexander. She attended elementary school in Dorchester and recalled the kindness of her



Kindergarten teacher who did not allow the other children to make fun of her as she entered school without speaking one word of English.

She excelled in academics and was admitted to the prestigious Girls Latin School in Boston. She often spoke of her one-hour commute there by three forms of public transportation. By her senior year of high school, she had been admitted to Simmons College of Boston with the goal of becoming a nutritionist. However, due to family financial circumstances, she began to work right away and soon advanced to the head of her statistics department in an insurance company.

On Labor Day weekend, 1942, she met George Shahinian of New York City at a wedding in Watertown. They courted at a distance

during his service as a pilot, and married in December 1945 shortly after the cessation of World War II. He predeceased her in 1980.

George and Shakae were founding members of the St. Thomas Armenian Church of Tenafly, NJ where Shakae held multiple leadership roles, including chair of many debutante balls and, ultimately was the first woman elected to the Parish Council and as Diocesan delegate. Upon moving to Wyckoff, NJ in 2002, Shakae became active at St. Leon Armenian Church of Fair Lawn, NJ. In 2019, she was honored, along with other members, for her 60+ years of Women's Guild membership.

Caring for her family, cooking and entertaining were great joys. She was an avid reader who said that having a book to read meant that you were never alone. Aside from her family and service to community, Shakae's great passion was playing bridge.

Shakae is survived by her brother Arthur Alexander of Arlington, Mass.; daughters Sheryl

Shahinian of Ridgefield, NJ; Sandra Shahinian Leitner of Wyckoff, NJ; Sharon Shahinian of Hoboken, NJ; Laura Shahinian Kara of Bethel, Conn.; son-in-law Frank Kara and former son-in-law Carl Varteresian; grandchildren Allegra Leitner Holben and husband Michael Holben, Evan Leitner and wife Danielle Leitner; Olivia Leitner; Gregory Varteresian, and Armen Kara; great-grandchildren Alanna Holben and Miles Holben; godsons Adam Alexander and Ian Alexander and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grand-nephews. She also leaves her cousin Harold Partamian of Arlington, Mass. and family; and cousins Annie Combe and Agnes Guitton of France.

In one of Shakae's many jottings and letters, she wrote "Think of me, let my name be spoken without effort. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? Think of me, talk of me, and I'll live forever."

All burial arrangements are private. A memorial service will be announced at a future date.

## Gerald Boghosian

### WWII Veteran, Landed in Normandy on D-Day

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Gerald Boghosian of Lexington died on April 8, 2020, after a courageous battle with COVID-19. He was 95.

Born on May 2, 1925 in Lowell, MA, to the late Garabed and Sattenig Boghosian, he was the husband of the late Elizabeth (Guregian) Boghosian. He was the father of Ruth Boghosian; brother of Rose Sirvart (Boghosian) Annaian and her late husband John, and the late Menas and Eva Boghosian. He is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

He was a veteran of WWII, U.S. Army. He landed in Normandy, France during the "D" day invasion along with the 297th combat engineers. They fought their way towards the Rhine and ended up at the Battle of the Bulge.

He was the owner of Complete Photo Service, Cambridge, MA. He was a member of the Amvets Post 41, Emeritus Member of the Council of Armenian Executives, member of Oakley Country Club, and member of Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Cambridge, MA.

Funeral and cemetery arrangements are private. A Memorial service will be announced at a future date, once the current COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.



tions have been lifted.

Arrangements by Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown.

## Charles G. Janikian

### Received Bronze Star, Purple Heart

WATERTOWN — Charles G. Janikian died on April 11. He was 95.

Charles was a decorated veteran of the 100th Infantry Division during World War II and won the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Combat Infantry Badge for his exemplary service.

He was a faithful member since childhood of the St James Armenian Church. He served his beloved church as a member of the Parish Council for a number of years. Charles was a member of the Victory Lodge of Freemasonry.

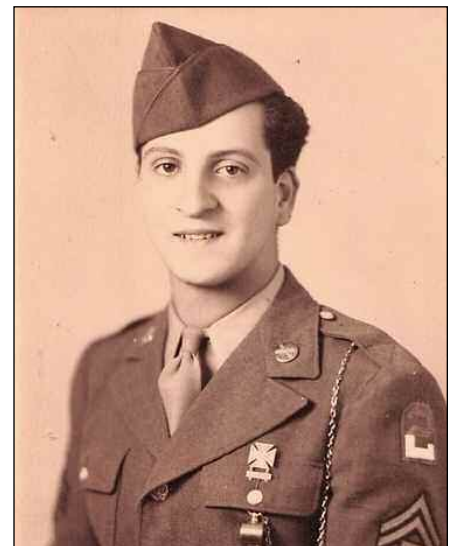
He was a dedicated member of the Amvets Post 41.

He was the husband of nearly 74 years of Laura Janikian (Jojokian). He leaves his children Leon Janikian and June Foster and Almas Janikian Omar and Ryan Smith.

Charles was the son of Krikor and Elmas Janikian (Khalolian), survivors of the Genocide. He was predeceased by his brothers Artin, Aram, and Gorun Janikian and by his sister Areka Der Kazarian (Janikian).

He was grandfather to Nadia and Yasmeen Owusu, Wahida, Iman and Hatim Omar, and Aaron Foster Janikian; brother in law of Harry DerKazarian, Margaret Janikian (Jojokian), and Mary Janikian (Samuelian); uncle of Ed, Greg and the late Alan DerKazarian, Sonia Janikian, Dianne Babikian (Janikian) and the late Leah Hevesian (Janikian) and Gregory Janikian, and Linda Takvorian (Janikian) and Gordon Janikian.

After retirement Charles and Laura spent a



number of years living in Naples Florida where he was able to play golf frequently with his wife and many friends. They took delight in traveling and saw many parts of the world. Upon returning to Watertown in later years Charles and Laura lived at an apartment on Bigelow Ave. and later at Brigham House Assisted Living.

Charles loved his family and led a full and loving life.

Funeral services are private.

Expressions of sympathy may be made to St. James Armenian Church Watertown.

## Sheldon Ananian

WATERTOWN — Sheldon Ananian of Watertown, formerly of Belmont, died on April 5 from COVID-19. He was 66.

He was January 5, 1954 to the late Shahan and Rose (Marsoubian) Ananian.

He leaves his wife, Karen (Antaramian) Ananian; children Abby, Katy, and Sarah and bonus father to Candace Ananian, as well as Nick, Grant, and Cassie Gilbert; siblings Valerie

Narsasian and her husband Carl and Paulette Arakelian and nieces and nephews Emily and Julie Narsasian and Adam and Alisa Arakelian.

A respected member of MENSA, Ananian graduated from the Belmont Hill School and went on to major in biochemistry at Tufts University, where he pitched for the baseball team and was a member of Phi Alpha Delta.

Sheldon proceeded to graduate summa cum laude as editor and chief of The Law Review with a Juris Doctorate from Western New England Law School.

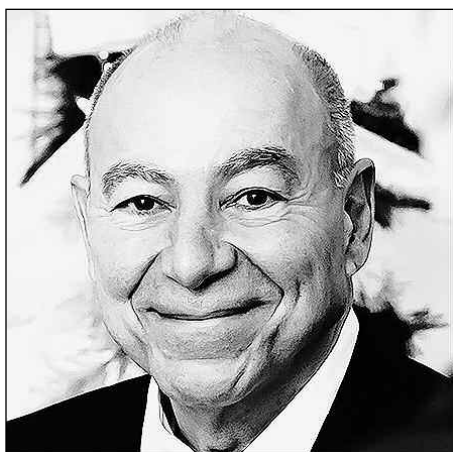
He was a longtime member and former trustee of the First Armenian Church.

A proud Armenian, excellent whistler, talented drummer, heavy metal fanatic, exceptional pilav maker, and New York Giants fan, Sheldon fought for and raised his three girls on his own.

After working at a boutique law firm, he co-founded Ananian & Rodibaugh, LLC, where he specialized as a personal injury litigator.

The family will have a Service and Celebration of Life at a future date, when it is safe and permitted to do so.

Funeral arrangements are private, conducted by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.



## Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Businesses in Glendale Grapple with COVID-19

BUSINESS, from page 1

lay off the sole employee, and even himself. With income cut off, paying rent will be a problem.

Other businesses are thriving. Enterprising Armenians are filling gaps in existing services and creating businesses while stuck at home. Marty Vardanian, 25-years-old, is buying exercise equipment online such as dumbbells or racks, and then selling it immediately. Apparently it is in almost as short supply as toilet paper, according to his mother Gayane Diana Vardanian. The items are only available briefly on websites so it is necessary to choose quickly, sometimes within an hour. Marty then resells locally without shipment through websites like OfferUp.

While restaurants have been closed except for delivery, grocery and other food stores are doing well. Some are trying to help their local community. On March 22, according to an employee, the Armenian-owned Paradise Pastry and Café in Glendale began offering any senior citizen one pack of four pieces of lavash (flat bread) between 7 and 8 a.m. The employee said that it was usually not necessary to check the age of people coming in for this, as it was obvious, and there has not been any abuse of the offer so far.

## An Inside Scoop on What Is Going on with Groceries

Kozanyan Meat and Liquor in Glendale is another store doing well. Owner Gayane Diana Vardanian explained that many of the Armenian stores have their own supply chains which are different from those that the main supermarkets rely on. Consequently, they often had supplies that mainstream outlets lacked during the peak of the virus panic. This appears to be parallel to the situation of bodegas in New York City (see <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/nyregion/bodegas-coronavirus-nyc.html>).

Vardanian exclaimed, “The first two weeks – I never saw anything like that, especially the day before the stay-in order.” Once she ran out of toilet paper and paper towels, she did not go looking for it anymore because it was being offered to her at unimaginably high prices. Canned products and water after the first two-week rush, however, are back in supply.

She confessed that Armenians are hoarders by nature, but in all fairness noted that they tend to have large families and also are big eaters.

Vardanian said that certain specialty items like fish from Lake Sevan or aveluk which had to be shipped are no longer attainable, but most other things brought from Armenia, Georgia or Russia are still kept in warehouses and ports. She said that keeping good relations with the warehouses and paying on time allows her store to have regular supplies.

Shortages occurred mostly for major American brands, like Gold Medal Flour or C&H Sugar. Vardanian said, “We might not have all of the brand names, but we balance it out.” If Hunt’s or Springfield tomato paste ran out at any particular moment, Armenian brands like Great Masis, Noyan or Tamara would fill in the gap.

Eggs and milk have been difficult to keep in supply. Kozanyan relies on an American company, which services her store first but the general situation is hard. Her meat supply was maintained overall, though at times in March, especially March 14-18, there was a lot of fluctuation in prices. However, Kozanyan tried to keep the increase in retail prices moderate.

Meat products, she said, including barbecue meat, still are flying off the shelves and liquor is also selling well. Ice cream sales have been crazy. Vardanian said it never has been this much in the

summer, and she ventured to guess that the reason is that children are staying home.

The demand for wheat, fish and deli products is increasing, Vardanian said, but the wholesale prices are also going up. On the other hand, Vardanian had expected more frozen foods to sell but this did not happen.

Kozanyan is constantly seeking new supplies. Vardanian said it is like a scavenger hunt at this point, and she does not negotiate prices down any longer with importers or suppliers because of the difficulty of insuring constant supplies. This does lead to an increase in her prices.

She also can expand now to increase the number of American products, she said, in part because the number of non-Armenian customers of all backgrounds, including Hispanic, has increased. They are being introduced to Armenian products as a result. Vardanian said, “They see our culture and like our food.”

Vardanian said that she has followed all health ordinances, and in fact took measures one week before the stay-at-home orders in Glendale. She covered her entire deli and meat section. She said it was quite sad initially: some fulltime employees quit work because they had cancer patients or other at-risk people in their homes and had other sources of income, while others stepped in to take their hours, risking their lives for their wages.

All her employees were given masks and gloves, and the entire store has been checked. There are restrictions on the number of people in her store at any one time, and if there are too many, she makes newcomers wait outside. Markings were placed inside the store to maintain physical distancing. She said that all these measures not only make customers feel more comfortable but vendors as well.

Initially, Vardanian said, many customers were disgruntled when they saw the spraying and cleaning. They asked why her employees were wearing masks and picked on them. They thought it was all propaganda and did not believe the government. Recent immigrants would tell her that they lived through Armenia in the 1980s and 1990s and beyond, and that this was nothing. They told her to be “doukhov” (courageous), so, she said, she would have to crack jokes to get through the awkwardness. However, during the week of April 6 when they began to see people they knew get sick, she said, they started taking it seriously.

In any case, the city of Glendale on April 7 also issued an order that masks must be worn by customers, as well as staff, in the essential businesses that continue to operate. Vardanian said she will try to obtain or fashion homemade masks to sell at a reasonable price to customers who do not come prepared.

Vardanian keeps a separate line for the elderly, though not at specific hours. She said that this line has diminished slowly but steadily, as it is the children or grandchildren now who are buying household supplies and only a few elderly show up in person. While the store generally does not deliver, if a customer is over 65 years old, it will do so as a courtesy.

Vardanian sees the positive sides of the current crisis. She said, “I believe the stay-at-home order has made families stronger. They eat at the same time; they are together. A dynamic like that of the Cleavers [the iconic family of the television show “Leave It to Beaver” in the late 1950s and early 1960s] has set back in. They have normal traditional dinners. I personally love it.” Her own family now eats together at 7 p.m. The children, even those in their twenties like her own sons can no longer eat fast food or eat with friends,

and sometimes they even cook for the family. Family members are calling up people whom they have not seen for years.

At work, she said, I see the sons are dropping off or picking up their mothers who are my employees. No one walks home, left unattended. She wondered, “Could that be our Armenian values? We are loving.”

## GG Delivery Service

Taron Lizagub, cofounder of the premiere app-based car service GG Taxi in Yerevan in 2014 and US COO Khachatur Grigorian were forced to take their business in California, which they began in April 2019, in a new direction due to the coronavirus crisis.

GG Taxi initiated a shuttle service between Los Angeles and Las Vegas as a niche from which to expand in the US. A further goal was to use such a fairly simple fixed route to eventually

were Armenians. After the situation normalizes, GG expects that it will continue as personal shoppers to many who have become comfortable with using their service.

Grigorian said, “It is during these sorts of crises – the closest to which after World War II perhaps is the collapse of the Soviet Union, which did not directly affect the whole world – that great opportunities are offered to those businessmen who can adapt and think of appropriate products. In our case, it is deliveries. Those businesses which can adapt will grow stronger. This is, true, very difficult.” He said that with over 3,000 employees in four countries, they had to find solutions, and in Los Angeles and Armenia for now this is it.

Lizagub added that the company gives as much protective gear as possible to its employees and soon, roles of workers would be further specialized to insure greater protection.



GG Delivery van

deploy its own autonomous driving technology. However, Lizagub said that Las Vegas has been an empty city practically for two months now. It was clear the shuttle service would not be able to continue and ride-sharing was no longer acceptable in Los Angeles.

Lizagub said, “We saw the situation was becoming serious. Our friends with children did not want to go to stores. They asked us to organize something and that is where it began.” They started to provide shopping and delivery services for groceries and other goods. Grigorian pointed out that the demand was great in the Los Angeles area and no existing online platform could satisfy it. He said, “We had thought about this but had no time to try it prior to the crisis, but now we both have the time and no choice.”

Unlike services which serve only one store, GG will go to a variety of stores and allow the customer to have control over the choice of items. Lizagub explained that perhaps if you ordered delivery only from a high-end store like Whole Foods, the selection process would not lead to problems, but at other types of stores you might not get the best quality items, whereas GG will employ greater quality control.

Usually it is families putting in the order, and the majority of customers are middle-aged women. On April 3, the founders said that this service began about ten days prior and already 100 families had been helped. The number of orders were 10-15 daily at the time, but were on the rise. Around 70 percent of the customers

Negotiations were underway with big stores and chains to permit deep integration of services for greater efficiency and security, and this would reduce exposure. Perhaps pickups could be done directly from warehouses, for example, to isolate contacts.

While GG’s shuttle drivers were covered by an umbrella insurance policy, a new one was necessary for the delivery business, and GG is in the process of finding one so its employees will be covered again.

The city of Glendale has recognized GG’s delivery service as one of the new businesses in the area working to serve clientele in a safe, healthy and creative way (<https://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/economic-development/emergency-business-resources/creative-business-solutions>). The city’s list, incidentally, includes another Armenian business, Serj Manukyan’s Dream Cars Sales and Leasing (<https://dreamcarsleasing.com/>) which offers a completely online way to obtain a car.

Grigorian said that GG intended to expand its services in the United States. He declared, “We are seeking employees now in Boston for our business, just as we are doing in Los Angeles. We can begin to help Armenians in the community there in deliveries.” GG also seeks new investors because this crisis is an opportunity for it to grow. Though the online grocery business has many competitors, Grigorian said sees good opportunities for technology startups like GG.

## Armenian Consulate General in Los Angeles Active During Coronavirus Pandemic

BAIBOURTIAN, from page 4

Necessary information regarding online extension of visas for one month and placed the respective link on its website and Facebook page. This costs more than \$400, and some people have begun to have financial difficulties. Fortunately, the US State Department recently enabled waiving this fee, which was a big relief for people, Baibourtian related. The Armenian diplomatic mission in Los Angeles also provides assistance to its citizens with filling those applications.

Baibourtian added that in response to his request addressed to the California-based Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS), the latter has set up a special hotline for Armenian citizens for questions or issues related to COVID-19 situation or any other medical concerns. AAMS’s office staff directs them to appropriate local clinics or otherwise arranges for their medical needs to be addressed. The Armenian American Medical Society also compiled and provided to the Consulate General a list of hospitals and health centers in Armenian

populated cities and towns of Southern California that provide Covid-19 related or regular non-coronavirus related medical treatment to Armenian citizens free of charge or minimal payment. For those Armenian citizens who are temporary visitors and don’t have medical insurance and cannot afford it, this help is of tremendous value. Baibourtian also briefed that he and his office regularly receives information about the medical needs of Armenian citizens and how those are addressed.

Ambassador Baibourtian keeps in touch with

the Armenian honorary consuls in Fresno, California and Las Vegas, Nevada, concerning their situation and needs. He said that he is regularly in contact with the Armenian community spiritual and lay leadership, including the Pan Armenian Council of [the] Western USA. He also works closely with US government authorities and considers biweekly conference calls with Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti to be very useful. Naturally communication and exchange of information with the Armenian Embassy in Washington D.C. is of a regular nature.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# A Glimpse into the Coronavirus Era of Operations of Armenian Churches, Schools and Organizations in Glendale and Pasadena

**By Aram Arkun**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

GLENDAL/PASADENA, Calif. — Armenian churches, schools and organizations are all finding ways to adapt to the restrictions of life with COVID-19. Physical interactions are being replaced as much as possible through alternative methods of outreach. What follows is only a limited sampling of what is taking place in this large Armenian community. No doubt more coverage will follow in upcoming weeks.

## Churches

Churches are in general closed physically to the public. Rev. Hendrik Shahnazarian, associate pastor at United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, said that his church continues to reach people through livestreaming of services, as well as dissemination of recordings. Meetings take place via Zoom, Facebook or other software. The telephone is a great tool allowing clergy to keep in touch with the populace, especially the elderly who may use the Internet less than others.

Rev. Serop Megerditchian, senior pastor of Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, painted a similar picture of his church's situation. He said, "As everywhere, here too there are some fears, though not panic. When they hear the news on the situation in the East Coast, this gives a negative picture." He said that he receives from community members in Pasadena and Glendale 30-40 requests daily by phone and internet for prayers from families in difficult situations. Some call at 11 p.m. or midnight.

They are depressed and staying at home in a situation that seems like a sort of imprisonment, he said. Those with families may have difficulties in coping with children who are now always at home.

Rev. Megerditchian continued: "Many were not interested in God before, but now they ask whether what has happened is the end of the world. Is God punishing us? Is Jesus coming to the world? Is it the result of our sins?"

He offers some counseling and prayers but may direct callers to specialists or doctors if that appears necessary.

Megerditchian himself calls to see how people are and offers to help with shopping if individuals are alone and unable to go outside. Bible studies are done via Zoom.

Fr. Sarkis Petoyan of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Pasadena (<http://pasadenaarmerianchurch.com/>) confirmed that his church too is closed physically, and all auxiliary activities cancelled. He said he went a few hours each week to the office, while the office secretary worked remotely from home.

He conducted services in the church which were being made accessible online. On Palm Sunday, for example, almost 6,000 individuals or families followed the badarak or mass remotely, whereas in past years 6-700 would physically be present.

Petoyan exclaimed, "The response from my texts and emails, and telephone calls, has been incredible. I think the people were really looking for a message of hope. They are thinking we cannot even take church for granted. People who never would have even approached me in the past have really expressed their appreciation for the message of hope yesterday, Palm Sunday." This was unlike any other Palm Sunday response. People are really searching."

Petoyan added that people would also call his office just to talk, while he too keeps telephoning parishioners daily to let them know their parish priest was thinking of them. He said that he sends out a weekly emailing that speaks to their fears and gives a one-page message. If people are truly alone, he provides them help. He has offered shopping assistance but so far, he said, everyone has family or friends to help them.

At the same time, he said that the Armenian population in Pasadena was a tough one. They or their parents went through the Beirut civil war and the turmoil and fighting in Iraq and Aleppo. Those from Armenia also saw many

hardships. So, he concluded, "I cannot say that they are indifferent but I can't say that they are paranoid either."

In general, Armenians and non-Armenians in Pasadena were behaving properly and the city streets were completely empty, he said.

One unusual aspect of the coronavirus crisis is that people are being let out of Los Angeles County jails (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-03-26/coronavirus-inmates-release-la-county-jails>). The vast majority, according to Sheriff Alex Villaneuva, are those with 30 or few days left in their sentences or people being held on bail of \$50,000 or less. As of March 23, approximately 1,700 inmates had been released, and another group of inmates awaiting trial for nonviolent, non-serious charges were being considered for release.

It turns out that some of those being released are Armenians. Petoyan said that he was getting calls from states remote from California saying that my son is getting out of jail in California but has no money and needs help and housing. He has gotten two calls of this nature, which means there are probably more who do not contact him. Fr. Petoyan helps these inmates as much as feasible.

The church, like the overall populace, is affected detrimentally by the economic crisis created by the pandemic. It has five units of

preschool.com/) in Glendale and the St. Sarkis Armenian Church Levon and Hasmig Tavlian Preschool and Kindergarten (<https://www.tavlianpreschool.org/>) in Pasadena have physically closed, like all other schools. The preschools, with children between 2 ½ and 4 years old, are no longer operating but the kindergarten students receive instruction via Internet for kindergarten students.

The Vahan and Anoush Chamlian Armenian School (<https://www.chamlian.org/>) is another school in Glendale which has transitioned to online elementary school classes. Chamlian, Tufenkian and Tavlian all are subject to the Board of Regents of Prelacy Armenian Schools ([prelacyschools.org](http://prelacyschools.org)), but make their own decisions. In general, assistant teachers and preschool teachers are on furlough, along with janitors and some other non-teaching staff, but all others have been kept.

All private Armenian schools are facing great financial pressure, just as their students' families are. The situation may get worse if the US economic recession turns into a depression.

## Organizations

The activities of Armenian community organizations have been circumscribed. One example is provided by Mihran Toumajan, who is Western Region Director of the Armenian Assembly of America. Toumajan said, "Like

with some members of the House of Representatives. He said that this would be the equivalent of a face-to-face meeting during a recess period, for example. On the other hand, for Armenian organizations, Toumajan said, "The challenge is that naturally many of the members of the House and Senate are devoting most of their time to COVID-19 matters and its effects on the economy." Nonetheless, the leadership of the Armenian Caucus is certainly spending time on issues besides COVID-19.

While the Assembly is working for aid to Armenia, and appreciative recently for US aid for fighting COVID-19 in Armenia, Toumajan in his personal capacity expressed concern over the difficult situation for the Armenian community in the Middle East. COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in Lebanon, for example, which has faced a serious economic crisis while Armenians welcomed Armenian refugees from Syria, itself in a desperate situation. What will be tricky for the Armenians of the US, he agreed, is to balance all the needs of Armenians in Armenia, the Middle East and now in the US itself during this crisis period.

Toumajan praised the cooperation among the three major committees with distinct April 24 programming annually in the Los Angeles area, which are the United Armenian Council of Los Angeles (UACLA, <http://www.uacla.com/>), in charge of the programming at the Montebello Armenian Martyrs Memorial; the Unified Young Armenians (UYA, <https://www.facebook.com/UYAPage/>), which does a march and rally in Little Armenia; and the Armenian Genocide Committee (AGC, <http://march4justice.com/>), which consists of over 20 Armenian community organizations that have a march in front of the Turkish consulate in Los Angeles. Since January, the three organizations have been meeting weekly to cooperate and present a unified message to the media.

Now with the pandemic enveloping everyone's lives, Toumajan said that the coordination continues, but events will basically occur in the digital or virtual realm. The Armenian Assembly is a dues-paying member of both UACLA and AGC.

The Assembly, Toumajan said, is continuing to work with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, especially Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Janice Hahn, in celebrating Armenian history month in April. The Board will continue to honor Armenian-Americans who have contributed significantly toward the betterment of the people of Los Angeles County. However this year this will not be in person. Instead, honorees will receive certificates by postal mail.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the Assembly encourages Armenians to donate blood to the American Red Cross (<https://armenian-assembly.org/2020/04/07/armenian-assembly-urges-support-for-american-red-cross-blood-drive/>) to help fellow Americans.

Toumajan is the current chair of the Pan Armenian Council of [the] Western USA, which was formed in August 2019 as a consultative coalition. It has 24 organizational members at present and its chairmanship is a rotating one. The council held an audio meeting at the end of March and issued a statement dated March 27 (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/04/09/p-an-armenian-council-of-western-usa-issues-statement-of-unity-and-strength/>) calling for unity and obedience to local health regulations concerning the coronavirus. It will soon issue a press release listing resources that Armenians might use in this situation.

Toumajan pointed out that according to its charter, the council cannot organize events or projects or do fundraising. It is there to offer guidance and to provide a sense of what is acceptable and what is not in the community, he said. It is following emerging difficulties for the local community. One is the aforementioned pressure on Armenian private day schools due to the virus and financial difficulties.



St. Mary's Richard Tufenkian Pre-School and Kindergarten

housing adjacent to its property and three of the renters asked for a break. Petoyan said that the church understands the situation and will be lenient though it also has its own debt to pay off.

## Schools

St. Gregory Alfred and Marguerite Hovsepien School (<https://www.hovsepianschool.org/>) in Pasadena operates under the auspices of St. Gregory Church. Fr. Petoyan said that from kindergarten to eighth grade every class is now working online, though it was a lot of work for the faculty to set this up. He said, "So far, we are able to keep all staff. We don't want to let anybody go or suffer. We will take a financial hit if we have to. We are all family."

The real challenge for the shift to online learning, he said, is the pre-kindergarten, with 70-80 children from 3 to 5 years old. The school is offering 2-3 days a week online learning, on a limited basis, for the older children of this group.

School principal Shahe Mankerian said, "Our goal, at Hovsepien School, is to accommodate our preschool-8th grade parents and students by keeping a sense of normalcy. We are keeping our students engaged and invigorated with daily live and recorded sessions. We are testing new ideas, particularly with preschool. We are looking ahead. Virtual learning is here to stay. We believe we have to be ready for future COVID-19 flareups, and we have to be ready to offer quality curriculum virtually."

St. Mary's Richard Tufenkian Pre-School and Kindergarten ([most people, we are working remotely, teleworking and using video conferencing and other sorts of conferencing to communicate to one or multiple people. It is something we used to do but now we do it in a much more frequent and routine fashion."](http://www.tufenkian-</a></p>
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The programming prepared or promoted by the Assembly for the spring and summer has been postponed for the most part, but some events are being transferred to the virtual realm. For example, "Teaching Film with Testimony," an educational forum on the Armenian Genocide by the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation that was supposed to take place at Wayne State University in Michigan on April 1 for middle and high school teachers, was turned into a webinar for April 14. The associate producer of "The Promise," a major film on the Armenian Genocide, will participate. The silver lining, Toumajan said, is that as an online event it was open now to anyone (<https://www.facebook.com/events/802069860303865>).

Toumajan is the host of the Armenian Assembly of America Radio Hour, the episodes of which are available online (<https://www.socalarmenian.com/category/armenian-assembly-of-america/>) after initially being broadcast on Thursday evenings. The radio hour began in January of this year and will continue to provide new discussions weekly on Armenian affairs that will perform take place solely in the digital realm.

Meanwhile, Toumajan said that the Assembly continues to speak with US Congressional offices, and looks forward to having call-ins





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Southern California’s Ararat Home Deals with Coronavirus Threat

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — The COVID-19 outbreak has affected Ararat Home in much the same way that it has all long-term care facilities. Responding to this crisis has required implementing a series of measures to protect residents from possible exposure to coronavirus. These measures have drastically changed the operations of the home, leading to a significant disruption in the everyday lives of residents and a heavier workload for staff.

Ararat Home operates three facilities. The main campus in Mission Hills is home to Ararat Nursing Facility (a 254-bed skilled nursing facility) and Ararat Assisted Living Facility (which currently has 110 residents). The satellite campus in Eagle Rock is home to Ararat Convalescent Hospital (a 42-bed skilled nursing facility). The great majority of residents are of Armenian descent. The majority of employees are of Armenian descent.

As the number of COVID-19 cases grew in Los Angeles County in early March and the first case of community transmission was announced on March 9, Ararat Home’s administration began reviewing the protocols, policies and procedures that had been established for the facilities, while closely monitoring the changing recommendations set by local, state and federal governmental health agencies as well as those from relevant health care associations.

Acting somewhat ahead of those guidelines, the administration restricted visitor access to facilities beginning on March 6. Considering the close-knit nature of Armenian families, some of whom would visit their loved ones at Ararat Home, quite regularly bringing clothes and other necessities and goodies with them, this restriction was understandably difficult to accept initially. However, with regular communication from the administration and management and the growing crisis in Los Angeles County, residents’ families appreciated the gravity of the situation and expressed their support for the restriction.

Following the visitor restriction, the other

measures put in place by the administration have progressively been more stringent in an effort to mitigate the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19 within the resident population as well as among staff. The strict infection control and prevention measures that have been implemented include the ongoing re-training of staff in these practices and educating residents in proper hand washing and coughing/sneezing etiquette. The facilities are constantly being cleaned and disinfected. For several weeks, all staff members have been required to wear a mask during their shifts, and they continue to be monitored throughout their work hours for any symptoms. Similarly, staff is closely monitoring all residents for any symptoms.

In addition to the restriction of outside visitors, all non-essential consultations within the facilities and residents’ appointments or visits outside of the facilities have been canceled. Besides halting the interaction of residents with non-staff outsiders, residents’ interactions with each other were also scaled-down and eventually stopped. All communal spaces (for dining and activities) are now empty, as residents are asked to remain in their rooms. All meals are served to residents directly in their rooms and all social activities have been canceled.

This change in residents’ everyday social life has understandably impacted their emotional and mental well-being. While the majority of residents in the Assisted Living Facility are able to walk outside for a change of scenery and participate in limited activities while practicing physical distancing, almost all residents in the Nursing Facility and the Convalescent Hospital are either non-ambulatory or unable to walk unassisted outside of the facility. In order to prevent the feelings of isolation and loneliness among all residents, staff members have increased their one-on-one interactions with them. While residents continue to receive visits from nursing staff in their rooms who care for their physical as well as emotional needs, they also now receive social visits from administrative and

management staff (whom they do not normally see regularly) who spend time chatting with them and connecting them through telephone or video chat with family members. Furthermore, management regularly communicates with family members to assure them that their loved ones are safe and cared for.

Besides the various strategies and measures that have been implemented in response to the outbreak, the other most significant step taken in preparation for the growing crisis has been the procurement of additional quantities of essential supplies. These include food and drink, paper and cleaning products, and personal protective equipment (PPE). While the Home’s usual suppliers were able to deliver the larger quantity for most of these orders, finding certain cleaning products required a bit more work and finding supplies of PPE was even more challenging.

While using the contacts that the administration had established within the industry over the years has been helpful, significant assistance came from several members of the Los Angeles Armenian community in the form of donations and connections to new suppliers. Besides receiving donations of masks as well as monetary donations for the purchase of additional supplies, Ararat Home also received offers from individuals and businesses to facilitate contact between the Home and their manufacturing partners and suppliers abroad. As a result, Ararat Home has been able to procure the necessary quantities of PPE for now and has a means of purchasing additional quantities in the future, as necessary.

For the past several years, all three Ararat Home facilities have operated at full capacity with a waiting list of applicants for each one. As no new admissions have been accepted in the facilities since early March and some residents have been discharged, the unoccupied spaces are being converted to isolation beds and rooms in preparation for any possible cases of COVID-19 among current residents.

As such, the facilities are as prepared as they can possibly be. Since the situation is

dynamic, the administration is closely monitoring new guidelines and remains ready to adapt new recommendations set forth by agencies.

Ararat Home currently (as of April 8) has no known cases of COVID-19 among its resident population. Some cases among staff members have been identified in the past week, and those individuals, along with colleagues who had been working in close proximity to them, are in quarantine.

While maintaining staffing ratios has been a challenge (as it has in many health care facilities) Ararat Home has thus far fared fairly well. The Armenian community’s support of the Home for over seven decades and the influence of Armenian culture on how services are delivered and how care is provided have created a unique experience for residents at Ararat Home. Ararat Home prides itself on providing quality, compassionate care to residents in a safe, home-like environment. This also means that employees feel a sense of responsibility and dedication to caring for residents. As such, the commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of residents continues. In turn, staff has been receiving support and encouragement from the residents themselves, their family members, and members within the larger Armenian community. And, the administration remains committed to ensuring the physical, social and mental well-being of staff members as well.

Many of the Armenian staff members, who are, for the most part, immigrants from Armenia and Middle Eastern countries, have remarked that they have been through difficult times before. As we have all been trying to make sense of this pandemic and of our current situations, perhaps the experience of having previously lived through turmoil affects the way some cope with the uncertainty of our present times. Whatever positive and negative memories, emotions and thoughts have been triggered recently, there is indeed a collective feeling among staff of togetherness and resilience.

# Maine Hoop Star Was Playing Professionally in Armenia at Start of Pandemic

BASKETBALL, from page 4

Once he got to SMCC, Martin, a three-sport athlete at Traip, learned to love basketball, thanks to SMCC coach Matt Richards.

“I really gave myself to the game,” Martin said. “That’s where I learned to be a real student. Before that I just played. Coach Richards turned me into a student of basketball.”

Richards recalled that Martin was under the radar in high school. “He wasn’t a big basketball club scene guy,” Richards said. “He wasn’t doing all the circuit stuff in the spring and the summer.”

Richards was intrigued by his upside. “When he came here he blossomed. ... He’s a match-up problem. He really developed himself with his long, athletic guard skills, but also understood if I need to get a bucket I’m going inside.”

At 6-foot-5, 200 pounds, Martin has a unique skill set. He’s a big guard, small forward type who can drain 3s, but is just as comfortable slashing to the basket. Plus he’s an effective rebounder.

During his final year at SMCC, Martin averaged a double-double (17.0 points, 10.2 rebounds).

Martin developed into a standout for the Seawolves during his three seasons. He scored 1,194 career points and pulled down 668 rebounds. He was twice named a United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) First-Team All-American as well as a two-time Yankee Small College Conference (YSCC) First Team selection. In 2019 he was named the YSCC Player of the Year after leading SMCC to a 23-7 record and a berth in the USCAA national tournament.

The journey was not seamless. After two years at SMCC, he played one year at Southern Maine. He put up solid numbers for the Huskies (15.9 points, 8.1 rebounds) as they went 15-11, but it wasn’t a perfect fit.

He ended up taking two years off from basketball, one of those years spent at a school in Illinois. He wasn’t sure what he wanted to do; although, in the back of his mind he was still toy-

ing with the idea of playing basketball professionally.

At first he thought he could do that without going back to school, but he soon realized that wasn’t going to happen. So he focused on returning to school to play his final year and complete his degree.

SMCC was the clear choice.

It was not an easy road back. Martin had been away from the game for two years. “It was hard to come back to the game,” he said. “My body was not where it was. I still played in men’s leagues and tried to stay active. But that’s not game shape.”

Richards was happy to have him back, but Martin said his coach made it very clear: “You really have to put in work to get back to where you were.”

He did that for the entire summer before the 2018-19 school year. “It was just a grind to try to get back in shape,” Martin said. “Get back in the gym shooting. Try to get my touch back. It was definitely an adjustment. By the time the season started, I was ready.”

Martin’s great final SMCC season put him into a position to seriously pursue his dream to play professionally overseas.

He talked with Richards as well as other SMCC players who had played overseas. He emailed his senior year film to FIBA (International Basketball Federation) teams with his hoop resume.

The turning point, however, came when he paid his way to play at a showcase in New York City and Rutgers University. “It was kind of a longshot,” he said. “There were a lot of good players, many from Division I.”

It took place over three days in late May. Martin played a total of five games, and felt he played pretty well.

At the end of the event, all the players were rated, roughly 300, and Martin, much to his surprise, was rated seventh overall.

He spent the rest of the summer working on

his game, staying in shape — and waiting. “It got to September and I was getting a little bit nervous,” Martin said.

Richards stayed on him as well, to remind him playing pro was different than college. “This is your craft,” Richards said. “You have to perform.” I was pushing him to understand that balance of being a professional athlete. ‘It’s your job now.’ It hopefully helped him when he was over there.”

At that point, Martin had bought a plane ticket to Dallas for an NBA G-League team tryout. Soon after that his agent called to say he had an offer from Gyumri in Armenia. It was a Sunday. He signed a contract on a Monday and flew out on a Thursday.

“I didn’t care where it was,” he said. “I just wanted to get my foot in the door to play professionally. I was happy.”

Gyumri is the second largest city in Armenia with 120,000-plus people, located in the northwestern part of the country.

It took Martin some time to adjust to the Armenian culture as well as the basketball, especially communication, but he came around. He missed his first game when he rolled an ankle, but the second game he made a statement with 29 points and 19 rebounds in a win.

He was one of two Americans on the team along with Julian Winton, a point guard from Kansas.

Games are four 10-minute quarters. There is a 24-second shot clock. The 3-point line is a foot deeper than college and the ball has less grip.

“Everything is faster,” Martin said. “Everything is initiated by ball screens, really.”

That worked for Martin who was used to that style playing for Richards at SMCC. “We had a lot of ball screening and making reads off ball screens,” he said.

Although it had no impact on the Gyumri team, the Armenian leagues have a rule that requires that no more than three imported players can be on the floor at any one time.

Martin found himself fitting in with his team. “I think we got lucky,” he said. “A lot of other teams, you could tell, as soon as people got down, the feeling shifted to, ‘I’ve got to make sure I’m looking out for me.’”

Martin said he didn’t feel the pressure to perform that other players on other teams might be experiencing. Of course, he was delivering, which helped. “I was putting up numbers, so in that sense I felt comfortable,” he said.

He averaged right around 23 points, and also elevated his game with his rebounding and defense. “A lot of guys don’t rebound from the guard/wing position,” he said. “I really separated myself in that sense by playing defense and rebounding.”

Martin also found adapting to a different country a challenge, especially the language barrier. “Just simple things like ordering food or getting directions or telling the taxi how to get back to our house,” he said.

He added that where he lived didn’t have amenities he took for granted like a microwave or a dryer. “Things in America we think are necessities are really just luxuries,” he said. “That was hard.”

Since he was playing on the low tier of professional basketball, Martin was certainly not getting rich playing the game he loved. Expenses were covered, mainly travel, housing and food. Game pay was approximately \$200 a contest.

The team played two games a week.

Martin is now playing the waiting game, hoping he’ll get a chance to return overseas.

“Right now I’m working out with the intention of going back,” he said. “Just trying to see what the reality is with the whole situation in the world, what the next season is going to look like. If it’s going to start later or what.

“I don’t think I’ll necessarily go back to Armenia,” he said. “But I’ll go anywhere; somewhere that’s a higher level and just continue to get better.”



# Arts & Living

## Amidst a Peanut Butter Panic, Teddie Steps up

By Billy Baker

EVERETT, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – The second week of March began just as many before it at Leavitt Corp. Peanuts and salt came in the door. Jars of Teddie Peanut Butter went out.

Then, seemingly overnight, the coronavirus pandemic changed everything. By the time Friday the 13th rolled around, the world outside the peanut butter factory was shutting down, retreating into isolation to stop the spread of the deadly virus. But inside the factory, under the iconic red sign and its dancing bear, Teddie's employees were fighting to keep up with a peanut butter panic that had swept the nation and emptied supermarket shelves.

The plant kept running over the weekend. The supply chain went on red alert. Strict safety measures were put in place. Truckloads of peanuts traveled from the mid-Atlantic to Everett. And this 90-year-old regional brand, so beloved it borders on having a cult following – many people argue you can't make a proper fluffernutter without it – accomplished the implausible in what felt like an instant: They tripled production.

Toilet paper and hand sanitizer have hoarded the hoarding headlines, but peanut butter has been close behind, with many stores forced to ration how many jars can be purchased at one time.

And so as health care workers lead the fight from the front, Teddie has been one of the unsung companies fortifying the rear, its employees drafted into a Rosie the Riveter role to fortify the supply lines that will help keep people at home.

In some ways, it is a return to Teddie's roots: The brand was started 90 years ago by Michael Hintlian, an Armenian immigrant, who had originally sold candies and mixed nuts. When the calamity of the Great Depression hit, he transitioned to peanut butter, with the goal of providing an affordable source of protein.

"We're not front-line responders like doctors and nurses. They're the heroes," said Mark Hintlian, the CEO and third generation of the family to lead the company. "But we as a com-



Mark Hintlian

pany feel we have a back-line role to play in this crisis, to restore the American food supply with a product that is shelf-stable, highly nutritious, and relatively low-cost."

It is a small role, in a crisis in which everyone can play a small role, but you can feel their pride in being able to fill it.

"The best way of saying 'We're there for you' is not a marketing campaign. It's for the product to be on the shelf when you get to the grocery store," said Jamie Hintlian, Mark's brother and the chief operations officer.

see TEDDIE, page 13



Fimy Ishkhanian

## Apricot Stone Will FaceTime You to Recreate the Restaurant Experience at Home

By Rachel Vigoda

PHILADELPHIA (*Eater Philadelphia*) – While restaurant dining rooms across the state are shuttered during the coronavirus pandemic, Philly restaurant owners are getting creative when it comes to engaging – and entertaining – customers. Bud & Marilyn's menu for delivery and takeout includes 1,000-piece puzzles alongside its buttermilk fried chicken, beer, and budinos. Triple Bottom Brewing is putting together care packages with ice cream from Weckerly's and coffee from Càphê. Takeout shop Angelo's Pizzeria, usually known for its long lines, even got a phone. And at Armenian restaurant Apricot Stone in Northern Liberties, owner Ara Ishkhanian is offering himself as a virtual host, server, and sommelier.

"One of my favorite things to do at work is interact with our guests," Ishkhanian says. "Now, I'm bored, other people are bored, and people are missing out on special events, like birthdays and anniversary dinners. We're trying to recreate that experience as best we can."

The first step in Apricot Stone's virtual dine-in experience is to phone the restaurant and make a dinner reservation. Ishkhanian will email a few questions, a menu, and a list of recommended wine, beer, and spirits pairings.

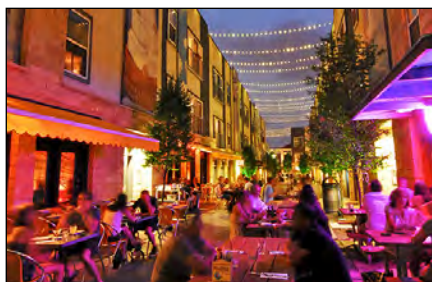
At the agreed-upon day and time, Ishkhanian calls via video chat: FaceTime, Duo, or Skype. Answer and you'll see him standing at the restaurant next to a table set with water and wine glasses. Music plays in the background as he guides you through the menu and takes your order.

Food options are from Fimy Ishkhanian, Ara's mother and Apricot Stone's chef and co-owner. She grew up in an Armenian family in Aleppo, Syria, and the dishes are ones any fan of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines will recognize, like baba ganoush, stuffed grape leaves, borek, and kebabs. "She's the talent," the son says.

He knows exactly when the food order arrives because delivery is handled by the restaurant's front-of-house staff, not an outside service like Grubhub. Employees also make money through the virtual dine-in experience, Ishkhanian says, since a 20-percent gratuity, added automatically to the check, goes to them.

Once he gets word that the food was dropped off, he waits five minutes or so and then calls via video chat again. He might fill a glass on his table as he checks in on yours, before leaving you to enjoy the meal.

"Something our guests really love is the atmosphere of our restaurant," Ishkhanian says. "People can just order and enjoy our food, but we wanted to also give them the option of an experience that's a little notch above just eating at home."



Outdoor dining at Apricot Stone

## Armenians in Quarantine 20 Ways to Get Hye

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Tired of being cooped up in your apartment or suburban home? Watched every "Will and Grace" and "CSI Miami" rerun? Made fudge brownies a dozen times and re-alphabetized your life? Even jogging outdoors can get a wee bit creepy when there's no one else to run by or tip your proverbial hat to. So here are 20 suggestions for things to do during COVID-19 that will bring you closer to your inner Armenian:

- The hills are alive with the sound of music: learn a few Armenian folk songs. Brighten up isolation by practicing them in the shower. If you have a deep – or shrill-operatic voice, you may impress the neighbors:

Go to: [www.armeniansongbook.com](http://www.armeniansongbook.com) and [www.haykakanmusic.com](http://www.haykakanmusic.com)

- Be bookish. Read Abovian's *Verk Hayasdani* (The Wounds of Armenia), the first novel ever written in Armenian:

Go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Wounds-Armenia-Lamentation-Historical-Language/dp/160444052X>

If you are monolingual and don't read Armenian, then try Rupen Janbazian's wonderful translation of Andranik Tzarukian's *Letter From Yerevan*:

Go to: [www.amazon.com/Letter-Yerevan-Andranik-Tzarukian/dp/1727508459](http://www.amazon.com/Letter-Yerevan-Andranik-Tzarukian/dp/1727508459)

- Learn to play the *duduk*. Practice outdoors on your balcony. You might as well be in the Armenian Highlands: Go to: <http://www.minasovduduk.com/duduk-lessons/>

- Boo! So what if Halloween is months away: make *ghapama*! You have to do something with all those nuts and dried fruit that you've squirreled away! Buy a pumpkin, hollow it out, fill it up. Simply delish. This guy does it with an Armenian-Australian accent: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU7vtBK085E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU7vtBK085E)

- *Gatta* have some cake! What would isolation be without a few sweets? Indulge in some good old fashioned *gatta*: Go to: [www.yummly.com/recipe/Armenian-Gata-with-Puff-Pastry-1848078](http://www.yummly.com/recipe/Armenian-Gata-with-Puff-Pastry-1848078)

- Wonder at the matchless beauty of Parajanov's "The Color of Pomegranates."

Go to: <https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-dcola-005&hsimp=yhs-005&hspart=dcola&p=watch+the+color+of+pomegranates#id=2&vid=5de2ed6192b87cda76149e46f1fa62b4&action=click>

- Enter the eerie world of our favorite Canadian filmmaker and hold your own Atom Egoyan film festival: Go to: [www.imdb.com/name/nm0000382/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000382/)

- He's the Pride of Marseille. Discover a new director, the incomparable Robert Guédiguian: Visit [https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0350168/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_nm\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0350168/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1) Guédiguian

- Be philanthropic. So what if you missed the annual Telethon? Help the homeland by making that late donation to the Armenia Fund: Go to: <https://www.himnadram.org/en/donate>

- Test your linguistic skills by taking an Armenian Language class at the AGBU's Armenian Virtual College: Go to: [www.avc-agbu.org](http://www.avc-agbu.org)

- Make a list of five things you love about being Armenian – share on line and have your social media buddies add on to it!

- Single and looking? Join an Armenian dating site and keep the flame alive. Virtual dating is all the rage! Visit <https://hysingles.com/>

- Get some religion: listen to the Armenian liturgy and watch services on line, from the comfort of your living room. Go to: <https://armenianchurch.us/>

see QUARANTINE, page 13



# From Our Home to Yours: A Family Affair Classical Concert Commemorates Genocide

LOS ANGELES – In commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, the Pogossian/ Manouelian family will perform a charity concert on April 23 at 10 p.m. EST ( 7 p.m. PDT) live-streamed on the YouTube, Facebook and Instagram pages of the Dilijan Chamber Music Series (<https://dilijan.larkmusicalsociety.org/>)

Honoring the 105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Pogossian/ Manouelian family – UCLA professor of violin and director of the UCLA Armenian Music Program Movses Pogossian, Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist Varty Manouelian, and their children cellist Edvard Pogossian, violist Cara Pogossian, and clarinetist Anoush Pogossian – will perform music by Komitas and Mozart, along with World Premieres of new works for clarinet quintet written specifically for this occasion by Ian Krouse, Artashes Kartalvan and Aida Shirazi.

The concert, which aims to bring solace and unity during this time of distress and distancing, will be streamed on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

The audience is invited to make voluntary contributions which will benefit:

- Music For Food (in support of food services of the Midnight Mission, Skid Row, Los Angeles) (<https://musicforfood.net/>)

• COVID-19 Campaign in support of free-lance musicians, by Gabriela Lena Frank's Creative Academy of Music - <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/glfcamgithrucovid>

- UCLA Armenian Music Program - Donate Here<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/resources/armenian-music-program/>

• Lark Musical Society/Dilijan Chamber Music Series, Glendale, CA - Donate Here <https://dilijan.larkmusicalsociety.org/support/>

Violinist Movses Pogossian is a Laureate of several international competitions, including the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Competition, and has performed extensively as soloist and recitalist in Europe, Northern America, and Asia. Avid chamber musician, he has collaborated with such artists as Jeremy Denk, Kim Kashkashian, Alexei Lubimov, Rohan de Saram, and with members of the Tokyo, Kronos, and Brentano string quartets. He is Artistic Director of the acclaimed Dilijan Chamber Music Series, currently in its 15th season. Champion of new music, Pogossian has premiered more than 80 works, and worked closely with such composers as Kurtág, Mansurian, Harbison, Saariaho, Chihara, among others. He was described by *LA Times'* Mark Swed as "...a sophisticated virtuoso, subtle and bold in his phrasing." Pogossian's discography includes the recently released Complete Sonatas and Partitas by J. S. Bach, as well as solo violin CDs "Blooming Sounds," "In Nomine," "Inspired by Bach" and Kurtág's "Kafka Fragments," with soprano Tony Arnold. Movses Pogossian is currently Professor of Violin at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, as well as founder and director of the UCLA Armenian Music Program.

Varty Manouelian made her American debut in 1993 with the North Carolina Symphony as First Prize winner of the Bryan International Competition. She has also been a prizewinner at a number of other competitions, including the Kotzian International Competition and the Wieniawski International Violin Competition. Manouelian has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras in the United States, Bulgaria, Russia, Armenia, Poland, Spain, and Italy. Committed chamber musician, she participated at the Marlboro Music Festival, and has collaborated with such musicians as Kim Kashkashian, Rohan de Saram, Nobuko Imai, Thomas Adès, and members of the Juilliard, Guarneri, Tokyo, and Brentano string quartets. Since joining the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2004, Manouelian has frequently performed at the LA Phil's Chamber Music Society and Green Umbrella Series, as well as at Camerata Pacifica and the Dilijan Series. Her recent Bridge Records CD of "Complete Violin Works of Stefan Wolpe" (jointly with Movses Pogossian) made the 2015 Top Ten list in the *Sunday Times* (UK). Varty Manouelian currently teaches at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music and at the Colburn School.

Edvard Pogossian (cello) is currently Young Artist in Residence at the Queen Elizabeth Music Chapelle in Belgium, studying with renowned cellist Gary Hoffman, and is simultaneously pursuing a master's degree at the Royal College of Music (London) with Richard Lester. As a winner of the Jonilliard Concerto Competition, Edvard

performed the Tchaikovsky Rococo Variations at David Geffen Hall in New York and at the Harris Theater in Chicago with the Juilliard Orchestra under the direction of Itzhak Perlman. The

the Marlboro Music Festival, and has also participated at Yellow Barn, Perlman Music Program's Chamber Music Workshop, Kneisel Hall, and Apple Hill festivals. He has studied previously with Rick Mooney, Ronald Leonard, Natasha Brofsky, and was a recipient of the prestigious Kovner Fellowship from the Juilliard School.

Twenty-one-year-old violist Cara Pogossian is currently a junior at the Curtis Institute of Music, under the tutelage of Hsin-Yun Huang, and is a co-principal of the Curtis Orchestra. As a member of the Aurielle String Quartet, she is a Bronze Medal winner of the 2017 Fischhoff International Chamber Music Competition. Cara has attended the Taos School of Music (NM), the Yellow Barn Young Artists Program (VT), and the Perlman Music Program (NY), and will be attending Ravinia's Stearns Music Institute this summer. Previously, she studied with Paul Coletti at the Colburn Music Academy, and also with Che-Yen (Brian) Chen. Cara has also taken private lessons with Kim Kashkashian, Misha Amory, Roger Tapping, Carla Maria Rodrigues, and Roberto Diaz. Cara was recently featured on NPR's "From the Top" radio show, performing Brahms' *Viola Sonata* with the host Christopher O'Riley, and

has also performed at several high-profile concerts at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Zipper Hall (LA), and in Toronto. Cara is an organizer of several Music for Food performances at the Montrose (CA) Farmers Market, raising funds for local food banks.

Seventeen-year-old clarinetist Anoush Pogossian studies with Michael Yoshimi at the Colburn School of Performing Arts, where she is a member of the Ed and Mari Edelman Honors Chamber Music Institute. She has toured throughout Europe and the United States as a member of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra (NYO-USA) under Sir Antonio Pappano, performing as Principal Clarinet in Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, and Seiji Ozawa Hall, and will be returning for the orchestra's 2020 North American tour. She performed with Leila Josefowicz on NPR's "From the Top" and will be participating in the Yellowbarn Music Festival's Young Artists Program for the third time. Anoush was recently named a Grand Prize winner of the LA Music Center's "Spotlight" competition, and her recognition as a 2018 YoungArts finalist and participation in National YoungArts Week led to her nomination to be a U.S. Presidential Scholar in Art in 2020. She has worked with Michele Zukovsky, Yehuda Gilad, Stephen Williamson, Ricardo Morales, Boris Allakhverdyan, Burt Hara, and Alan Kay, and performed under Karina Canellakis, James Conlon, Christian Macelaru, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Carlos Izcarav, and JoAnn Falletta.



*Chicago Tribune* praised Edvard's performance for his "astonishing musical and technical maturity," as well as his "winning lightness of touch to everything he played, combined with a velvety tone." Some of the performance highlights include solo appearances with Boston Pops and Hollywood Bowl Orchestras, as well as chamber performances at Carnegie Hall, Zipper Hall, Louvre, and on NPR's "From the Top" radio show. Edvard will be returning this summer to

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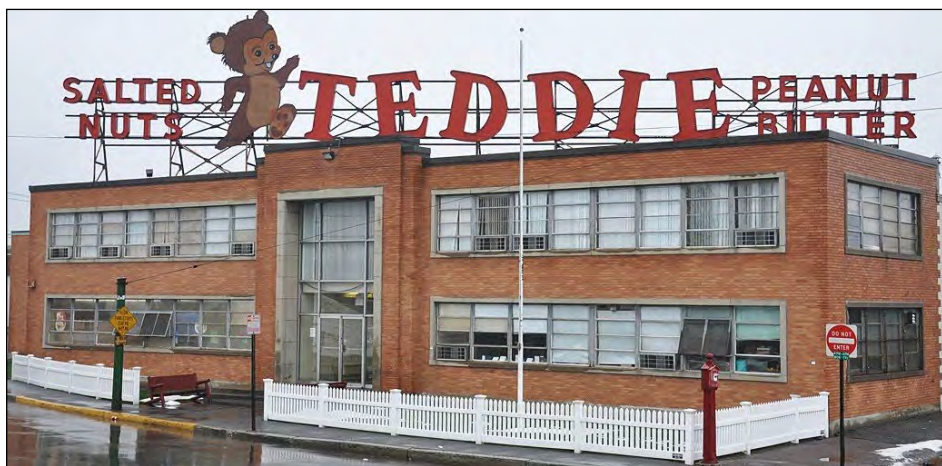
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## ARTS &amp; LIVING



Teddie Peanut Butter factory in Everett, Mass.

# Amidst a Peanut Butter Panic, Teddie Steps up

TEDDIE, from page 11

He said the company had been preparing for a possible increase in demand since February, but as March arrived and brought with it the first closures and cancellations, things still felt like “an out-of-body experience, where all these things seemed to be happening around us.”

By Friday, March 13, demand had hit a crescendo that has not stopped.

To keep up, safely, has required an extraordi-

nary level of coordination among not only the employees at the Everett factory, but up and down the supply chain. Jar, lid, and label suppliers had to step up, as did the peanut shellers themselves, who are all based in the United States and concentrated in Georgia, Virginia, and the Carolinas. To get the 2,000-pound bags of peanuts to Massachusetts, they had to chase down new trucking options, a task that was made easier by the unfortunate fact that many other industries are suffering.

In Everett, they kept the plant running on weekends and staggered work shifts to minimize contact. Face masks became mandatory, the facility was shut to visitors, and they installed a porta-potty outside for the truck drivers. Even lunch times were shuffled to keep people from crowding into the break room, and most of the chairs were removed.

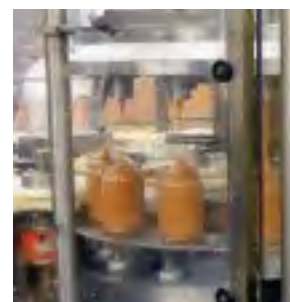
“We’ve asked a lot of our employees, and I’m so proud of how they have responded,” Mark Hintlian said. “Their spirit is incredibly high. We all feel like we’re part of something important. I would love to give them a hug, but the waves I get when I walk through the plant are enough for now.”

To thank the employees, many of whom also go back generations with the company, the Hintlians have instituted an ongoing bonus for everyone while the state of emergency lasts. “This was something we actually debated because we didn’t want to incentivize people to make bad decisions or to come to work if they weren’t feeling well, but we felt the need to express our appreciation for how hard they are working,” Jamie Hintlian said.

It’s a lot of work for peanut butter, but as the Hintlians are well aware, for those who love the nutty spread, it is more than a food – it is a simple comfort. And you can hear the emotion in the brothers’ throats when they talk about how it feels to be able to provide that comfort to people at a time when such feelings are in short supply.

“I can’t tell you how it feels to get a text message from a friend to say they just went to Market Basket and while this and that were cleared out, they were able to get their Teddie,” Jamie Hintlian said.

(Lane Turner of the *Globe* staff contributed to this report.)



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian



### Esther Bagdasarian’s Grape Leaves (Yalanchi Sarmas)

*A Hundred Years and Still Cooking, Recipes from First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno*

#### INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup olive oil  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
1 large onion, sliced, plus 1 medium onion, sliced  
1 cup long-grain or converted rice  
1 8-oz. can tomato sauce  
Juice of 4 lemons  
1 large bunch flat leaf parsley, chopped  
1/4 teaspoon dried dill weed  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Cayenne pepper  
Paprika  
1 16-oz. jar grape leaves

#### PREPARATION:

Heat olive oil and vegetable oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook until golden and limp, about 10 minutes. Add rice, tomato sauce, lemon juice, parsley, dill, salt, and cayenne and paprika to taste. Add water to cover if liquid in pan does not cover onions and herbs. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until all juices are absorbed, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool completely.

Put 1 grape leaf on plate. Place about 1 tablespoon filling at bottom of leaf. Fold in sides and roll up. Repeat with remaining leaves and filling.

Line baking pan, such as roaster with lid, with grape leaves. Arrange filled leaves in 3 or 4 layers in pan, alternating direction of each layer to promote even cooking. Cover with additional grape leaves and weight down with heat-proof plate.

Add water to cover. Cover with pan lid and bake at 400 degrees for 1 hour. Cool completely, then refrigerate at least 1-2 hours (or overnight) before serving.

Makes about 50 stuffed leaves. Each stuffed leaf: 75 calories; 52 mg sodium; 0 cholesterol; 7 grams fat; 4 grams carbohydrates; 0 protein; 0.09 gram fiber.



## 20 Ways to Get Hye

QUARANTINE, from page 11

• Be a Patron of the Arts: find an Armenian artist that you really like and purchase a favorite work – here’s one! See [www.lindaganjian.net](http://www.lindaganjian.net)

• Re-connect: pick an Armenian relative or friend that you haven’t spoken to in a while and communicate via phone or social media.

• Laughter is the best medicine: in Armenian watching Vahé Berberian in Armenian and Lori Tatouljian in English on You Tube: Go to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P\\_74PBm-1q8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_74PBm-1q8) or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEzok96\\_kUM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEzok96_kUM)

• Camp it up. Host a Virtual Karaoke Night, Armo style: Charles Aznavour, Cher, Rosy Armen – pick your favorite Armenian singers and record you and your buddies, virtual Karaoke style.

• Try your hand at writing: compose a text in Armenia or a story in English with an Armenian theme. Send it to a few magazines and voilà – you may soon be a published author!

• And last but not least, sit the family down for a peaceful shish kebab dinner: have a fine Areni wine, complain a lot and make someone feel guilty. Make sure you interject a few amans, oofs and djanigs! Start Again. Have fun!



[johnavakian.com](http://johnavakian.com)

Survivors of the Armenian Genocide  
Monoprint: Detail of Redesign

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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Unity and Disunity in Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As coronavirus sweeps across the globe, all national and international divisions and debates have become irrelevant. Humanity is mobilized to confront this invisible army, as battle lines are being drawn to protect the human race.

Self-preservation, the ultimate goal, is dependent on the preservation of the other, even across political fault lines.

When a revolution takes place in a certain country or a government is overthrown, continuing battles and divisions become impediments to the realization of the goals that the new forces seek.

Most revolutions devour their own sons, as one can see with the French and Russian Revolutions. It is in the interest of the revolutionary powers to create stability in the country conducive to the implementation of the new ideals or political platforms. Incidentally, history has proven time and again that leaders of revolutions becomes the worst statesmen.

This column has referred on many occasions to the case of South Africa, where the minority white Afrikaner population had instituted an apartheid form of government, denying the black majority civil or even basic human rights.

The African National Congress, led by Nelson Mandela, waged a war of liberation domestically, which combined with the international political pressure, brought down that regime. It would have been understandable if the emerging black-majority government wanted to retaliate in kind against their white oppressors. However, wise leaders such as Cardinal Desmond Tutu and former president, F. W. de Klerk, were able to form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to prevent that kind of outcome.

In the neighboring Zimbabwe, which was the new name for Rhodesia, the opposite process led the country to become a bankrupt, failed state, as young revolutionary Robert Mugabe pushed out that country's leader, Ian Smith, as well as his comrade-in-arms Joshua Nkomo, who was forced to flee. Mugabe failed to fulfill his commitment to white farmers, starting the beginning of the ends.

Unfortunately, very few cases in modern political history have followed the path of South Africa; consequently most have failed to form stable governments.

Almost two years ago, a Velvet Revolution took place in Armenia, a bloodless coup, with its very specific characteristics. A young generation, headed by Nikol Pashinyan, came to power. Many worried that certainly the remnants of the ousted regime would be enraged with rancor and revenge. Retribution was expected.

Pashinyan, a fiery revolutionary who had spent much of his adult life demonstrating behind barricades or behind bars, realized early on that running a state apparatus was quite different from spewing incendiary rhetoric in the streets.

Coming to power, he toned down his anti-Russian vitriol in his foreign policy and wore the mantle of a benevolent ruler. However, the public he had roused and who had catapulted him to power, continued seething with a need for revenge.

After forcing his way into the position of prime minister, he and his immediate young team continued to consolidate his rule, through constitutional means, as Armenia became dependent on European structures, such as the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Venice Convention and others. His policy of replacing the judiciary through the rule of law was interpreted as a weakness by his constituents, which expected Pashinyan to throw the members of the Constitutional Court judges to the dogs. Instead, he maneuvered to bring the changes by revamping the constitution itself through a referendum, which was scheduled to take place in April, before the pandemic scuttled those plans.

Pashinyan's constituency is out for blood, even now. They are entertained by watching former President Robert Kocharyan behind bars or embarrassed in front of a kangaroo court, or watching another former president, Serzh Sargsyan, dragged in front of a fact-finding mission dealing with the issues of the 2016 war.

On the other hand, the old guard, after illegally amassing huge assets, is waging an unforgiving campaign against the new government. Unfortunately, the divisions run deep in society,

just as the young administration needs stability and time to get its act together under the threat of war and a pandemic.

There has not been any group or individual advocating for stability or reconciliation. The time has come to rise to the occasion and bring society together to build a strong state structure to navigate Armenia through uncharted waters.

Apparently the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, has decided to become the voice of reason in these troubled times.

Normally the taciturn elder statesman does not throw himself into domestic political melees. But his voice rises when crisis strikes Armenia. He came forth during the 2016 war with Azerbaijan, calling for the nation to rally around the government. On this occasion, he certainly was not motivated by his fondness for President Sargsyan.

Ter-Petrosyan seems to be compelled by the current crisis to come up with another call for unity, on the site iLur.am. He prefaced his call with the following statement: "During wartime, all political controversies are set aside through written or unwritten pact, to allow the authorities to concentrate on the situation and deal with the challenges."

That message should have been taken on its own merits, not based on likes or dislikes for the messenger. But it has turned out otherwise.

Ter-Petrosyan calls for:

- Abiding by the rules of the lockdown.
- Stopping the campaign of spewing hatred and doubt on the authorities.
- Stopping the politicization of issues emanating from the restrictions imposed in this time of emergency.

To balance his call, Ter-Petrosyan has called on the authorities to:

- Freeze all the activities of the Parliamentary Fact-Finding Commission dealing with the April War of 2016

Indeed, the head of that commission, Antranik Kocharyan, has called the former commander of Armenia's armed forces, Gen. Yuri Khachaturov and former President Sargsyan in an apparent intent of public intimidation. Khachaturov has declined to appear and Sargsyan

has agreed, under certain terms and conditions.

- Stop the public debate about the recent elections in Karabakh to allow time for the formation of a stable government in that republic.

The most compelling call is in the last paragraph, which states:

"We expect that the second and third presidents, who yield considerable power through news outlets which they control, could tame immediately their news media, their attacks against the government, demonstrating a statesman's behavior."

The reactions in the news media and political quarters constitute the matrix that measures the maturity of society.

Unfortunately, no sober assessment of the call appeared in the media. In fact, all sides criticized the message. It was apparent that even the pandemic crisis could not temper emotions.

Ter-Petrosyan's message concluded by the following optimistic note as he wrote: "I have confidence in our people's common sense to come together in times of adversity, in a united way."

There are no grounds to believe that Ter-Petrosyan's message hit the target. Instead, of its sobering intent, it further provoked tempers.

A few samples from those reactions demonstrate, unfortunately, that society in Armenia, as a whole, is not ready to countenance the gravity of the situation and rise to the challenge in a united way.

An erudite political commentator, Levon Shirinyan, who is on the most revolutionary wing of the Velvet Revolution, had a bombastic reaction to the appeal. On the other hand, Armen Ashotyan, the spokesperson for the old guard, the despised Republican Party, was equally critical. Antranik Kocharyan, an old disciple of Ter-Petrosyan, was sarcastically dismissive of his old mentor's message.

Serzh Sargsyan's office joined the chorus of the critics, as well as the government spokesperson.

No matter how much one would have liked to share Ter-Petrosyan's optimism, one would be hard-pressed to find a shred of evidence that his call has found a receptive audience

The question which arises is how many enemies, earthquakes, wars and calamities do Armenians have to witness to realize that their salvation lies in their unity?



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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Pro-Armenian, Pro-Kurdish  
Turkish Philanthropist Jailed in  
Turkey

It is widely known that the Turkish government deprives the rights of minorities living in the country, whether they are Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Jews or Kurds. However, the Turks who are the overwhelming majority of the public are the biggest victims of the abuses of the Turkish authorities. Tens of thousands of innocent Turks have been jailed under false pretenses.

One prominent example of such inhuman treatment is Osman Kavala, a Turkish businessman, philanthropist and human rights activist who has been jailed on trumped-up charges twice. Last February he was released from jail for supposedly trying to overthrow the government and then rearrested the same day before he could be released.

Kavala's imprisonment made headlines around the world. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled last December that Turkey had jailed him without reasonable cause. "His detention was intended to punish him as a critic of the government to reduce him to silence as an NGO [non-governmental organization] activist and human-rights defender, to dissuade others from engaging in such activities and to paralyze civil society in the country." The sinister reason Kavala was released from jail and rearrested the same day was to temporarily comply with the ruling of the ECHR and then

jailed him under new charges which would keep in prison several more years while Kavala's lawyers contest the new charges in Turkish courts and then in the ECHR.

On April 9, 2020, the *New York Times* published a lengthy article by Carlotta Gall titled, "From Prominent Turkish Philanthropist to Political Prisoner." Gall wrote: "Mr. Kavala has become the most prominent political prisoner in Turkey, and as he himself ruefully acknowledged after his re-arrest, his case is a prime example of the state of injustice in Turkey today under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. His case is just one of half a million prosecutions underway amid a government crackdown since an attempted coup in 2016, but it is one of the most confounding. Best known for his good deeds, he has been variously accused of espionage, links to terrorist groups, and trying to overthrow the government. Even seasoned lawyers, well used to decades of political trials in Turkey, have described the various charges against him as 'ridiculous.'"

Kavala studied economics at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom and started work on his doctorate at the New York School for Social Research in New York, but interrupted his studies when his father died in 1982.

Kavala then got involved in defending human rights. He founded Anadolu Kultur, an organization that supports art and cultural collaboration. Gall reported that "he supported an arts space in Diyarbakir, the biggest Kurdish city in the southeast; cultural memory projects for Yazidis, Kurds, Armenians and other minorities; and a program to encourage a normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. ... He became one of the leading philanthropists in the country, well known among embassies and international donors and an energetic supporter of civic and human rights groups."

Gall stated that Kavala was jailed because "he represents the leftist-leaning, secular elite, which in Turkey's polarized society is the opposite of the president and his supporters. They are from religiously conservative, Islamist circles that were long sidelined from power. 'Osman represents another culture,' said Asena Gunal, who runs his flagship organiza-

tion, Anadolu Kultur. 'Someone who is open, cultured, who speaks English, can talk to foreigners, active in society; something they see as dangerous.' As he spent 16 months in detention without knowing the charges against him, the pro-government news media and even Mr. Erdogan himself accused him of nefarious connections, including being part of a Jewish conspiracy led by Mr. Soros. Some analysts say that his work with Armenians and Kurds is hated by elements in Turkey's security establishment."

Kavala has been urging the Turkish government to recognize the Armenian Genocide. He visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan on April 24, 2016. He told News.am: "First of all, there has to be a sincere intention to look at history, to look at what had happened, to open up the archives properly, and to have a very sincere dialogue with the Armenians. Fortunately, there are some steps, but we still can't see that at the political level."

In an interview with Civilnet, a website in Armenia, Kavala praised the German Parliament's recognition of the Armenian Genocide "as an example of a healthy cross-party consensus reviewing the darker chapters of national history." Kavala also attended the reopening of the Sourp Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir after its renovation.

However, despite his liberal and leftist leanings, Kavala was quick to dodge Armenian demands from Turkey to return to Armenians their historic lands. In December 2007, I had quoted him in my column, "Turkey Could Gain More Than Armenians by Acknowledging the Genocide," stating that "it is not possible to dismiss the issue of compensation so readily." Kavala responded by sending me an email stating: "I don't think that, 'land return' is a legitimate demand which can be taken seriously. Bringing it up would discredit the arguments for justice and reconciliation." He naively suggested that we should leave "the 'land issue' in the hands of God," adding that he would happy to meet with me to talk about this issue.

Nevertheless, the civilized world should speak out for the immediate release of Kavala, one of the many innocent victims of President Erdogan.

Obituaries Provide Comfort and  
Sense of Community in This  
Time of Coronavirus Chaos

By Vahe Gregorian

The first purely random obituary I ever remember reading was in the Philadelphia Daily News in 1991. It was written by Jim Nicholson, a remarkable investigative reporter who became a legendary obit writer.

The obit was about a Philadelphia woman named Addie Vinciguerra. The headline simply proclaimed that she "loved to talk and listen."

Though it's hard to remember precisely why it moved me the way it did, I clipped it out and still have it somewhere.

I know the broader reason it was so compelling, something well-articulated in an obituary of Nicholson last year, and something that helps explain why I found myself at what was essentially a drive-through funeral on Sunday ... a poignant scene we'll get back to here shortly.

Nicholson "spent 19 years celebrating the lives of men and women who were the true lifeblood of the city — the cooks, carpenters, bus drivers and janitors whose stories often went untold," the Philadelphia Inquirer wrote, later adding that he "treated everyday Philadelphians' obituaries with the sort of care that that was normally reserved for celebrities and heads of state."

Those stories are all over Kansas City and everywhere else, of course, even though few papers employ full-time obituary writers anymore — a lamentable casualty of the changing times in the business.

But The Star still prints paid remembrances, with the first eight lines free on behalf of anyone who has lived in the Kansas City metropolitan area, and I try to read those every day.

When I asked myself why, my thoughts first flickered to that famous line of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren as quoted in Sports Illustrated in 1968:

"I always turn to the sports section first. The sports page records man's accomplishments; the front page has nothing but man's failures."

Those lines have long since blurred in so many ways, of course, perhaps particularly now as we are engulfed in the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that at least indirectly is part of all our sports stories with everything shut down.

The obituaries, though, typically remain a singularly inspiring place to turn — paradoxical as that might sound. Because even amid the mourning, they present a chance to appreciate the grief of others and celebrate lives.

Sometimes I read them aloud about at the breakfast table. Like this one about James Lee Rainey Jr., who was 90 when he died on March 21. Never mind that he once was president of Kerr-McGee Chemical: He was "big-hearted, forgiving and generous," and he was known to admonish his five children to "act like you know something ... before being introduced to adults or a tense situation."

"Family meals could easily last for several hours. Sometimes his children would fall asleep at the table or fake illness to escape an evening lecture series."

Obits help us pause to remember those who might appear neglected. And they should make us think, too, of those unmentioned or alone.

It's a place shared by the greatest generation and the most recent generations. They are of our parents and neighbors and children and friends, and they are of strangers.

They are of Mayflower descendants and first-generation immigrants and all races.

They were board members, and they worked the assembly line. They are the extraordinary and the ordinary, which is not to be confused with being the famous and the lesser-known.

They are what we all we come from, varied as our forms and ways might be.

They are us.

Even if the snapshots are incomplete and tend to be framed in the most favorable light, well, who can't use some favorable lighting?

They are all reminders of just how interconnected we truly are.

That hasn't changed with these bizarre times.

In fact, that notion of fundamental connection is more clear and present than ever in our separation from each other.

But now those stories are tinged with another sorrowful element: Notices of funerals and memorial services delayed or canceled or, at best, to be carried out only with social distancing. All subject to being exacerbated by rules that have been confusing.

Anyone who has lost someone close to them knows the power, the necessity, even, of proper remembrance in these piercing moments of our lives. And the comfort of friends and family in view, ample tears to be shared and hugs to be had.

Still, we adapt and adjust and try to find our ways, don't we?

Through resolve and imagination and, as ever, humor.

Like the family of Norman "Jerry" Jerome Neale did, as printed in The Star on March 17 after his death on March 10 at 79 years old.

"Within the family we Neales are somewhat notorious for our unfortunate timing," his obituary stated. "So somewhere Norman is probably chuckling wryly that he died at the beginning of a pandemic. That being so, following cremation the family plans a private graveside ceremony.

"We ask that friends and family remember Norman, the founder of the 'Neale Wolf Pack,' by throwing back your head and howling loudly. The Galoot would love that."

Obituaries, of course, serve another simple and vital service — such as could be found in the brief one that caught my eye last week about Raymond Boler, who was 72 when he died on March 30. (His broader story, including details of his burial at Ft. Leavenworth, is being told by The Star's Eric Adler.)

The seven-line notice in the paper requested that friends pay their respects by driving through to view his casket in the portico at the Church of Christ in Overland Park on Sunday.

So a little like I did with the Addie Vinciguerra obituary, I guess, I tore the obit out of the paper.

Then I carried it around a couple days and decided to drive by.

Guided to keep the windows up and proceed slowly through, I glanced out the passenger side at photos and the flag on his casket.

And I waved to the family of a U.S. Air Force veteran who was passionate about water skiing and snow skiing and cherished his children and family and married Francina Rae Crim on October 19, 1968.

As I drove away, I thought about the sheer cruelty of a time when even grieving is challenged but also about the beautiful and sustaining spirit of this.

The idea came to Francina Boler from a variety of thoughts, including seeing news about drive-through birthday parties for children and the experience of people setting up televisions outside the church for post-service Chiefs tailgating.

So she thought, "If we can't have an indoor funeral, we'll have an outdoor one."

The good people of Bruce Funeral Home in Gardner worked with the church to put it together. They got word out through social media ... and that obituary in the paper.

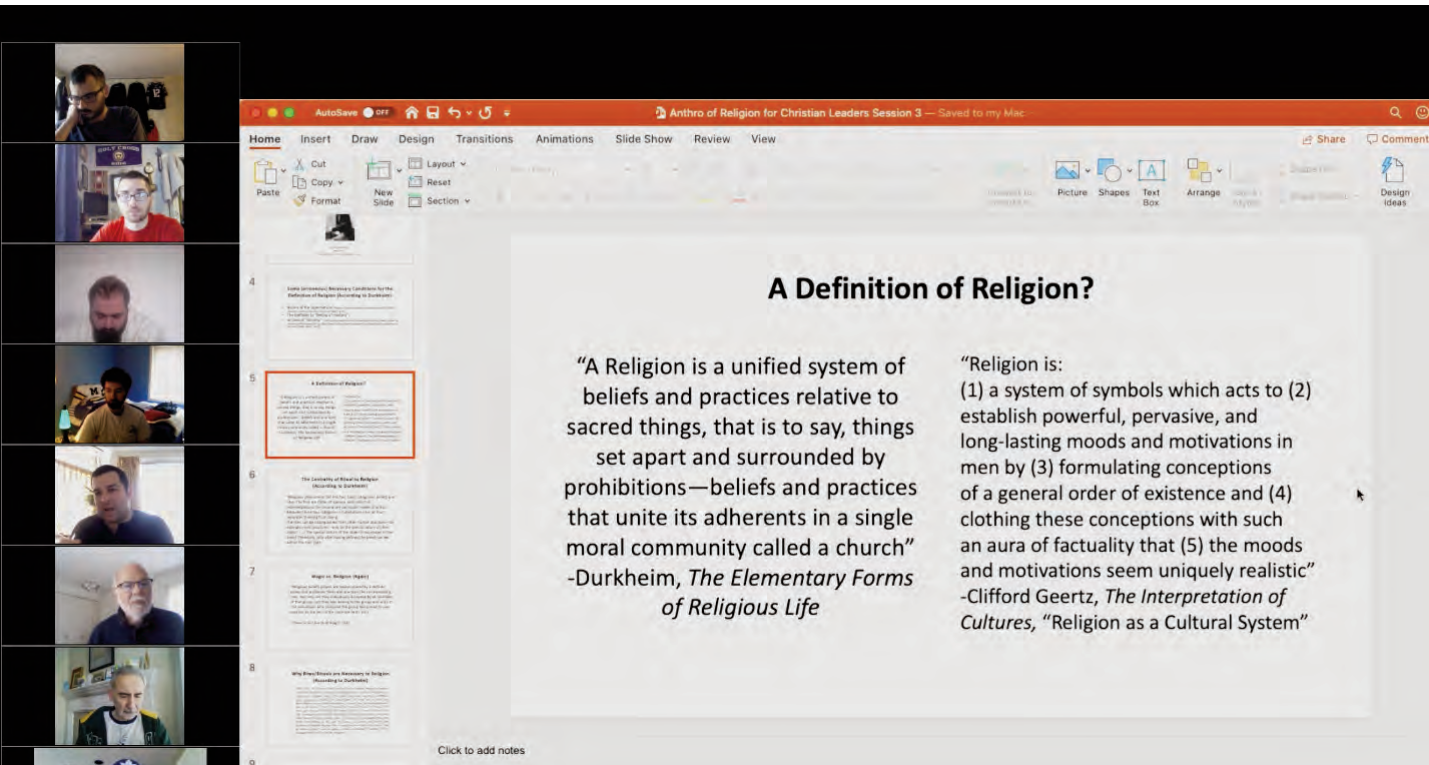
By her estimate, about 115 cars drove through carrying some 250 people from all phases of their lives. Many held signs of encouragement and other messages of love to the windows.

"It turned out," she said Tuesday, "to be a really heartwarming thing."

And more testimony to the beacon that obituaries can provide even now. To tell us about each other and help bring people together when we need it most.

(This commentary originally appeared in the *Kansas City Star* earlier this month.)





Some students and clergy during intensive course.

## Remote Learning for Seminarians and Clergy

ARMONK, N.Y. – During this surreal time, the academic program at St. Nersess Seminary remains fully active and classes remain in session. Although students are not physically present on campus, they are taking their classes and instruction remotely at St. Nersess and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries. Both institutions are providing a normal daily schedule through online platforms. The students and dean have also begun conducting daily worship services remotely.

Last week a required course for seminarians, “The Anthropology of Religion for Christian Leaders,” was also offered remotely to our clergy. Dr. Christopher Sheklian, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center and member of the St. Nersess faculty, offered a four-day intensive course March 23-26.

The seminary plans to offer additional courses to clergy in the future.

## Mt. Davidson Cross Illuminated in Blue to Honor Health Care Workers

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – Since 1923, Mt. Davidson Landmark Park and Cross has been the home to the annual Easter Sunrise Service which brings together the community each Easter for a non-denominational city-wide celebration at the highest peak in San Francisco. Due to the coronavirus and the resulting shelter-in-place order, this 97-year-old tradition has been canceled this year, the first time ever in its history.

However, keeping with tradition, the Council of Armenian Americans of Northern California (CAAONC), the guardians of the Mt. Davidson Cross has decided to continue the tradition of lighting the cross at dusk every Easter Eve. This year will just prove a bit different.

Buildings and landmarks across the Bay Area and the U.S. have been awash in blue light as part of a campaign to show support for healthcare professionals and essential front-line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The #LightItBlue effort turned other Bay Area landmarks blue this week including Levi’s Stadium and Coit Tower.

This historical San Francisco landmark sits at 103 ft tall, nestled on the highest point in the city where it serves as a place of peace, reflection and remembrance. It is one of the oldest landmarks in San Francisco and stands as a memorial to the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

**About the Easter Sunrise Service**

In 1923, George Decatur, official of the Western Union Telegraph Co., director of the YMCA, and resident of the Sunset District in San Francisco, organized the first sunrise service, drawing over 5,000 attendees. The annual event has grown each year since its inception.

Since 1997, the Council of Armenian-American Organizations of Northern California (CAAONC), has been the legal owner of the Mt. Davidson Cross and assumed the responsibility for maintaining it. The Mount Davidson Cross was rededicated as a memorial to the 1.5 million Armenians who perished during the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and in honor of all victims of injustice and cruelty, in protection of human rights and the dignity of all people.

Television and other media covered the unusual lighting, including ABC News, which interviewed Sevag Kavaranian of the CAAONC.



The cross lit up in blue

## Armenian Assembly Urges Support for Red Cross

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) urges all Armenian Americans to support the American Red Cross’ drive to save lives by giving blood.

“The Red Cross has come to the rescue of the Armenian people throughout the past 100 years and more,” stated Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian. “The Red Cross was there for the Armenian people when its founder and philanthropist Clara Barton brought aid from the United States in response to the Hamidian Massacres. The Red Cross was there for the Armenian people during the Armenian Genocide, and the American Red Cross was among the first international response teams to arrive in Armenia after the devastating 1988 Spitak Earthquake,” the Co-Chairs continued.

In March 1991, at a dedication ceremony cosponsored by the Armenian Assembly of America, American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole unveiled a memorial statue donated by Armenia in appreciation for America’s relief efforts in the wake of the 1988 earthquake.

A gift from Armenia to America in gratitude for earthquake relief efforts, the inscription reads: “To the American People from a Grateful Armenian People – Earthquake Assistance, December 7, 1988.”

“During this unprecedented time as a result of the COVID pandemic, Armenian Americans can show their appreciation for the Red Cross by giving blood to help fellow Americans affected by the pandemic and the front line medical personnel who are tending to their urgent needs,” the co-chairs concluded.

Founded by Clara Barton in 1881, the American Red Cross has been dedicated to serving people in need. The Red Cross received its first congressional charter in 1900 and to this day is tasked by the federal government with providing services to members of the American armed forces and their families as well as providing disaster relief in the United States and around the world.

## Armenian MFA Urges Citizens in Russia to Maintain Contact with Embassy

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia’s foreign ministry urged on Tuesday, April 14, its citizens stranded in Russia to maintain close contact with only the Armenian Embassy and RA Councilor services in the territory of the Russian Federation.

“The RA citizens occurred in difficult situation due to the novel coronavirus pandemic should turn with their urgent enquiries to the Armenian Embassy and Consular services operating the territory of Russia in the first instance,” the ministry said in a released statement, adding the citizens should provide comprehensive information about their situation and urgent needs they may face.

It was noted that the Embassy and consular serviced work at their best to support its citizens, including through providing possible temporary shelters to those who may need them the most. Since the suspension of flights from Russia, the government has arranged three charter flights to Moscow bringing around 600 Armenians home.